

TRACKING PROGRESS

ENGAGING COMMUNITIES

Abbott Indicators Technical Report

Camden

NEW JERSEY



EDUCATION LAW CENTER



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Public education helps today's children prepare for an adulthood when they can take meaningful roles in society, compete in the labor market, and contribute as members of their communities. All of New Jersey's children and youth have a constitutional right to a "thorough and efficient" free public education. This represents our state's promise to provide an education that at least equips students with the knowledge and skills to meet the state's rigorous academic standards. Until all of New Jersey's children receive the same high-quality education, this constitutional promise is not realized.

Executive Summary

Several years ago, education stakeholders recognized that children did not receive the same education throughout our state. Urban and suburban school districts did not have the same resources to support their schools. Thanks to the efforts of education professionals, parents, and advocates, the lowest income cities and the wealthiest suburbs now have the same funding to support general education. The poorest urban school districts are also required to undergo a series of reforms and improvements to ensure that the funds are used to fulfill the constitutional promise.

Who should support these reforms and ensure that the schools continue to improve? Everyone who cares about public education. Schools belong first to the community and everyone in the community has a stake in them. Parents want their children to have the best education possible. Homeowners and businesses support public education through taxes. Community members want to be sure that their collective investment is used wisely and effectively to educate the children.

We wrote this report with Camden's education stakeholders in mind. The report is a tool to help them identify and support what is working and ensure that remaining challenges are overcome. The goal of an equally sound education for all New Jersey students is reachable with their continued support and commitment.

Camden Abbott Indicators Project and Report

Camden is one of 31 urban school districts in New Jersey known as Abbott districts. As an Abbott district, Camden receives funding to equalize its per student general education budget with the most successful suburban school districts in the state. Camden's young people are also entitled to universal, high-quality preschool; reforms to help them meet the state's rigorous standards for academic achievement in Kindergarten through Grade 12; safe, healthy, and educationally adequate school facilities; and many other programs and services to ensure that they come to school ready to learn. Through a series of

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indicators, the Camden Abbott Indicators Report presents the status of these reforms and student progress to date.

The Camden Abbott Indicators Report and three others we are releasing this year in Newark, Trenton, and Union City are products of the Abbott Indicators Project at the Education Law Center. The report is written for a wide audience: everyone with a stake in public education in Camden. The project goals are to:

1. *Inform* people in Camden about the status of school improvement efforts and student outcomes.
2. *Engage* people in Camden in exploring and discussing what is working and what still needs to be done.
3. *Develop* and put a plan into action that supports school improvement.
4. *Establish* a system of accountability practices that local education stakeholders can use in years to come.

Key findings of the Camden Abbott Indicators Report are presented below. First, we list indicators about Camden as a community and the students who are enrolled in the public schools. The remaining findings

are organized by Abbott remedy: preschool, K-12 education (including standards-based reform and supports for students and families), and school facilities construction. All of the remedies we have in place in New Jersey are intended to work together to ensure a seamless plan for school improvement. They are presented separately because they have distinctive logics and requirements.

The indicators cover a broad range of topics about school practices and a number of student outcomes. We break down school practices into six “elements of effective schooling.”¹ Ultimately, maximizing *opportunities for students to learn* is the main focus of school improvement efforts. Other elements of effective schooling are needed to provide students with these opportunities. These are: *student and family supports, teacher qualifications and supports, budget, leadership, and school facilities*.

Academic progress and student well-being are the end products of *all* of the elements of effective schooling. We encourage readers to view student outcomes in light of how well all

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of the elements of effective schooling have been implemented. In the full report that follows, all indicators findings are presented with accompanying figures and discussion.

Key Findings

The Community and Students

- At 15.9 percent in 2000, the unemployment rate was almost three times higher in Camden than it was statewide.
- In 2000, more than one in three Camden residents lived below the poverty level compared to eight percent of residents statewide. That same year, nearly half of Camden's children were in families earning below the poverty level compared to 11 percent throughout New Jersey.
- In 2002, the violent crime rate was almost five times higher in Camden than it was throughout the state.
- In 2003–04, nearly 80 percent of Camden's public school students were eligible for free-or reduced-price lunch compared to about one in four students statewide.
- 244 Camden children did not have a permanent home in 2003–04.

- Camden students move a great deal more than New Jersey students on average—nearly one in three entered or left school at least once during the 2002–03 school year. High student mobility disrupts educational progress and has negative effects on student learning.

The Preschool Program

- By 2005–06, all Abbott districts are required to enroll 90 percent of their eligible populations of three- and four-year-olds. In 2003–04, the Camden preschool program was near capacity in its existing facilities. Yet, only about three-quarters of the city's eligible children were in the preschool program that year. According to district estimates, most of the remaining children were in Head Start programs that had not yet met Abbott standards. Barriers preventing these providers from meeting the standards include insufficient space and facilities and too few teacher-mentors to help their teachers earn certification.
- The law requires that school districts provide children with disabilities with educational experiences and services tailored to their individual needs. For as much time as possible, this education must be in an environment with general education students and not in self-contained settings. Nearly all of Camden's 186 preschoolers with disabilities were educated in self-contained classrooms. The district reports that more inclusion classrooms will be operating in the Early Childhood Development Center, slated to open in Fall 2006.

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- In 2004–05, nearly all teachers in district-run, Head Start, and other private provider programs had earned their four-year college degrees as required.
- Camden's preschool teachers were on their way to meeting the Abbott certification requirement. In 2004–05, all teachers in district-run and Abbott Head Start programs had at least provisional certification. Five out of 82 teachers (6.1%) in other private provider programs still needed to fulfill this requirement.
- In Camden, the average preschool teacher salary was \$44,865. On average, preschool teachers in district-run programs earned \$12,000 more than did teachers in any other provider type. Teachers in district-run programs had more years of experience as lead teachers than their counterparts in the other provider types (with the exception of the two teachers in Enhanced Head Start programs). The district reports that all preschool teachers are paid on the same salary scale.
- At \$12,374 per preschooler in 2003–04, Camden's preschool aid was comparable to the district's combined per-student budget for Kindergarten through Grade 12. The district reported, however, that its funding level dropped in 2004–05 when special education funding was addressed separately.
- Better program quality and child outcome measures are needed for all Abbott preschool programs to help stakeholders to identify programs that work and those that need more assistance.

K-12 Education

- Research shows that children in the early elementary grades benefit from smaller class sizes. Abbott funding has had some immediate, clear effects on conditions in the Camden schools: average class sizes are smaller than the Abbott standard in all grades. In Camden, the average elementary school class size decreased between 1994–95 to 2002–03. High school class sizes rose slightly during the same period, however.
- Camden has about 2,900 special needs students ages six to 21. Only about one in four students with disabilities goes to school in a "very inclusionary" setting where they are educated with general education students for 80 percent or more of the school day.
- Camden's high schools offer many honors and advanced placement courses to help students become more competitive applicants and prepare them for college. We compared Camden's AP course offerings to those in Cherry Hill, a nearby "I" district. Camden offered four advanced placement courses compared to Cherry Hill's 17. The district's high schools are now implementing a five-year plan to add advanced placement courses, increase enrollment in existing courses, and improve student performance on advanced placement tests.
- Camden faculty attendance improved between 1994–95 and 2002–03. At 95 percent in 2002–03, the faculty attendance rate was at about the same level as it was in the other Abbott districts and throughout the state.

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- In 2003–04, more than four out of five Camden elementary school teachers were highly qualified in *all* of the core subjects they taught. Even so, Camden had the lowest percentage of highly qualified teachers in its elementary schools of all of the district groupings we examined.
- A large majority of Camden’s high school teachers were highly qualified in 2003–04 and high school staff compared well with other district groupings. There was a real gap between Camden and the other district groupings in the percent of *classes* taught by highly qualified teachers, however. Slightly more than half of Camden’s core high school classes were taught by highly qualified teachers, compared to 90 percent in the other Abbott districts and 95 percent across the state on average.
- In 2002–03, the district was not funding several staff positions required under Abbott. Some of these positions were filled in 2003–04, including health and social service coordinators, family liaisons, and technology coordinators. Camden schools did not employ any teacher tutors to assist children having problems with reading in either year, however.
- Property wealth is an important indicator of local capacity to support its public services including education. The wealthiest suburbs had 15 times more property wealth per student than Camden in 2003. That same year, the state average was almost ten times that of Camden.
- On a per student basis, Camden and the other Abbott districts have as much money as the successful suburban districts to support general education. In fact, there has been equity in funding for general education between the poorest cities and the wealthiest suburbs in New Jersey since 1997 when Abbott parity funding began.
- In 2003–04, Camden received an additional \$1,802 per student in supplemental program aid to support the second half-day of Kindergarten and other programs and services to meet the needs of its students and their families. The district’s per student supplemental programs support decreased by about \$1,000 since 2002–03, however.
- Each Abbott district should have an “Abbott Advisory Council,” a steering committee that represents the district and its community stakeholders. The primary responsibilities of the Council are to review district policies and procedures to implement the Abbott reforms. As of September 2004, Camden did not have an Abbott Advisory Council. A community reviewer of this report noted that the absence of a districtwide Council limits the district’s ability to carry out its policymaking and oversight functions under Abbott.

- The City of Camden compared poorly with the state on two indicators of child and youth well-being. Although there has been some improvement in teen births and child abuse and neglect, both rates are still high at almost four times the state average. As a central public institution, schools play a critical role in ensuring the well-being of children and youth. Schools are not alone in their responsibility—parents, elected officials, and public and private agencies in the city must all play a role.
- None of Camden’s schools qualified as persistently dangerous because of the number of Category A incidents. A total of three elementary or middle schools in Camden sustained a high enough number of Category B violent or disruptive incidents to place them in the persistently dangerous category under federal law. Camden High School was also designated persistently dangerous by this measure.
- Camden’s fourth graders have made gains in language arts. Camden’s general education scores rose most dramatically in 2000–01, as did the scores in many districts throughout the state, and stayed at about the same level through 2002–03. Fourth grade general education math scores improved by seven percent during the same period.
- When compared to the array of instructional programs and reforms for elementary school students, Abbott has yet to provide for students in the middle and high school grades. Overall, Grade 8 and 11 average scores have remained at or below the proficiency thresholds (except for early Grade 11 math scores, which were slightly above proficient before the introduction of a new test in 2001–02).
- At 10 percent, the district’s 2002–03 elementary school suspension rate was higher than that of any other district grouping we analyzed. Elementary school suspensions increased from six percent in 1999–00. At 12 percent, Camden’s 2002–03 high school suspension rate was lower than the state average (15%) and the average of the other Abbott districts (21%) and about the same as it was three years earlier.
- In New Jersey, there was no official way to estimate graduation rates until recently. In this report, we estimated historical graduation rates using a cumulative promotion index. Our estimates suggest that fewer than half of Camden’s class of 2001–02 graduated from school. Although alarming, the district’s promotion index improved from a low of 35 percent seven years earlier. By this measure, high schools across the state have graduated about 80 percent of their students and the wealthiest districts have graduated about 90 percent.

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- About two out of five students in the class of 2002–03 graduated by passing the traditional Grade 11 exam, the High School Proficiency Assessment. Most of the remaining graduates that year had taken the alternative test, the Special Review Assessment.
- Participation in college entrance exams has ranged from 55 to 65 percent between 1994–95 and 2002–03 in Camden. Camden student performance on the verbal and math tests has remained below the state average over this same period.

School Facilities Construction

- Camden's first-round long-range plan was conditionally approved by the New Jersey Department of Education because the district proposed spaces that were not allowed under the published standards.
- Camden was one of six districts in the state awarded a "Demonstration Project." The new school will replace the existing Catto Elementary School and includes a community center run by the Boys and Girls Clubs.
- As of September 2004, 14 out of Camden's 34 school construction projects were in the pipeline toward completion, none were in construction or completed.

- The district has been criticized for including too few community representatives too late in the process to allow meaningful input into school construction plans.
- The Camden Board of Education has had a difficult time finding and acquiring suitable sites because of land shortages, competition from private real estate development, and environmental problems.
- Progress on school construction has been hampered by a lack of coordination between district officials and the Camden Redevelopment Agency on the one hand and the school board on the other.
- Camden was one of a very few school districts to include upgrades to private preschool provider buildings in its first-round facilities plan. Because Camden's plan never received full state approval, it is unclear if the district still intends to upgrade these facilities.

Endnotes

1. We thank Fred Frelow of the Rockefeller Foundation for suggesting this approach.

Next Steps for Education Stakeholders

- **Read the report.** Try to make the time to read the whole technical report: it contains a lot of useful context and information. If you cannot, read the summary report. Both are available on the Education Law Center website: www.edlawcenter.org.
- **Talk about what you learned.** Discuss what you read with your friends, family, congregation members, and work colleagues.
- **Dig deeper.** Ask why and how. If you read about something that pleases or concerns you, learn more about why and how it came to be that way. Ask about quality. The indicators may tell you that a program or practice exists but not how well it is being implemented.
- **Look at other sources of information.** The Abbott Indicators are comprehensive, but not exhaustive. Other sources of information will be needed to get a clear idea of what the schools are doing. For example, low-performing schools undergo an external review process called Collaborative Assessment and Planning for Achievement (CAPA). If your school had a CAPA review, you can read the resulting report.
- **Look for meeting announcements.** Look for events and meetings where other people in your community will be discussing this report in particular or school improvement in general. You can find out about them on local television stations and in local newspapers.
- **Take part.** Attend local meetings and engage in conversations about what you learned with your neighbors, school and district staff, and your school board members.
- **Push for solutions.** Remember the goal is to support school improvement. It is not enough to identify strengths and weaknesses. Once you talk about the findings with your neighbors, decide what needs to be done and help make sure that it happens.
- **Stay involved.** School improvement is a multiyear investment. It will take your continued commitment.

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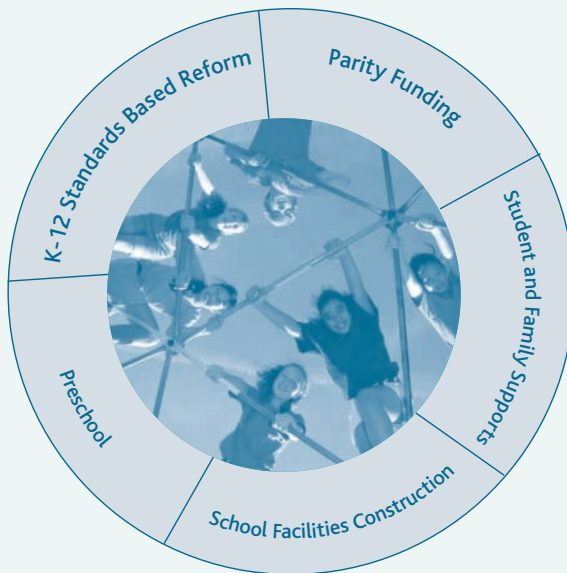
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Other Abbott Districts

Unlike anywhere else in the nation, in New Jersey, the poorest urban school districts and the wealthiest suburbs have the same funding to support a general public education. Young people in our state's urban districts are also entitled to a broad range of remedies.

Introduction

FIGURE | A

Abbott v. Burke: New Jersey's Framework for Urban School Improvement



These include:

- Universal, high-quality preschool;
- Reforms to help them meet the state's rigorous standards for academic achievement in Kindergarten through Grade 12;
- Safe, healthy, and educationally adequate school facilities; and
- An array of programs and services to help students come to school ready to learn and succeed in school.

Urban school districts did not always receive the same resources as their peers, and could not afford to support the programs and services needed to help students thrive in school. These benefits were won as a result of the efforts of advocates, parents, educational professionals, and the urban schoolchildren, represented by lawyers in a series of lawsuits before the New Jersey Supreme Court, collectively known as *Abbott v. Burke*, or simply "Abbott." The main goal of the resulting reforms is to ensure a high-quality education for urban public school students and to close the achievement gap between them and their suburban peers.

The Abbott reforms began in earnest in 1997 when the state equalized school funding between the wealthiest suburbs and the poorest cities. Local planning for state-financed school facilities construction started in 1998. In 1999, Abbott elementary schools started implementing Whole School Reform, Abbott districts first applied to the state for funding to support supplemental programs, and high-quality preschool first became available. All of the reforms envisioned in Abbott are now under way across the state.³

The Abbott Indicators Project

Under Abbott, there are means to improve New Jersey's urban schools. The challenge now is to ensure that the children get the education to which they are entitled. The Education Law Center started the Abbott Indicators Project with this concern in mind. To ensure that all students achieve at high levels, and that money is spent with their educational needs as the top priority, it is essential to develop a way for policy makers, parents,

community members and the public at large to gauge the progress of reform. The specific goals and action steps of the Abbott Indicators Project are as follows:

Goal 1: Inform stakeholders about the status of school improvement efforts and student outcomes. We need a way to know what the schools are doing well and where more progress needs to be made. The indicators in this report are similar to the dials and lights on the dashboard of a car. They help readers understand what is working and what might need closer attention.

- The Education Law Center identified questions that stakeholders have about schools and developed a set of indicators to address these questions.
- We gathered and analyzed indicator information and summarized it in this and three other Abbott Indicators Reports—one each in Newark, Trenton, and Union City.
- District staff and school-community stakeholders were invited to participate in a review of the draft report. We incorporated their input wherever possible. Reviewers were invited to submit additional comments and recommendations. Any comments they submitted appear in an Appendix to this report.

- We are issuing two versions of the Abbott Indicators Reports. This technical report contains the findings from all indicators analyses with additional contextual information and appendices. A shorter summary version contains a briefer introduction to the report and the key findings on a subset of indicators.

Goal 2: Engage stakeholders in exploring and discussing what is working and what still needs to be done. Like dashboard lights, the indicators provide some but not all of the answers. School and community stakeholders need to ask more questions and engage in conversations about what the schools are doing to support student learning.

- The Education Law Center will work with community members in each of the four cities to hold meetings to discuss issues raised in the report and ask more questions.
- We will help to establish a climate in which school and community stakeholders can talk together constructively and do a closer inspection where needed.
- The discussions will focus on what the schools are doing well so that they can be encouraged to continue the good work. They will also examine areas where the schools could do better.

To ensure that all students achieve at high levels, it is essential to develop a way for stakeholders to gauge the progress of reform.

Introduction

Goal 3: Develop and put strategies into action to address report findings. Knowledge is only helpful if we use it to take the steps needed to support school improvement.

- The Education Law Center will support district and community partners as they prioritize among the findings to identify strengths that will need to be supported and areas of concern that can be addressed.
- We will then assist them in working together to select and adopt effective strategies to address strengths and weaknesses.
- A timeline will be set when stakeholders can get together to review the progress made.

Goal 4: Establish a system of accountability practices that local education stakeholders can use in years to come. These actions need to continue on a regular basis to elevate the dialog about schools and support student learning. The final goal of the Abbott Indicators Project is to help school districts and their communities put these practices into action in the years to come.

- Education Law Center will work with district and community stakeholders to plan ways to continue information gathering, school-com-

munity conversations, strategic planning, and follow-through.

The Report

The purpose of this report is to inform everyone who cares about public education in Camden about what the schools have done to support student learning to date. The report is intended for a wide audience to serve as an information, advocacy, and planning tool.

In this report, we focus on how the district implements the elements of effective schooling within the context of New Jersey's Abbott reforms, the federal No Child Left Behind Act, and the state's academic standards. Public education is not a completely local matter, however. The New Jersey Department of Education has specific responsibilities under the law and plays a critical role in how the law gets translated into action. The state has varied its implementation and enforcement of urban school reform in New Jersey—as administrations have replaced one another and even within administrations. Throughout

this report, we note specific instances where changes have affected district practices.

These shifting winds have surely affected New Jersey's Abbott districts. But they have not affected Abbott districts in the same way. School districts have different community characteristics, local political contexts of their own, and strengths and weaknesses. Most importantly, districts make different programmatic choices, and have different student outcomes. In this report, we highlight the unique local circumstances and choices. School-community conversations that follow also will focus primarily on these local issues.

Organization of the Report

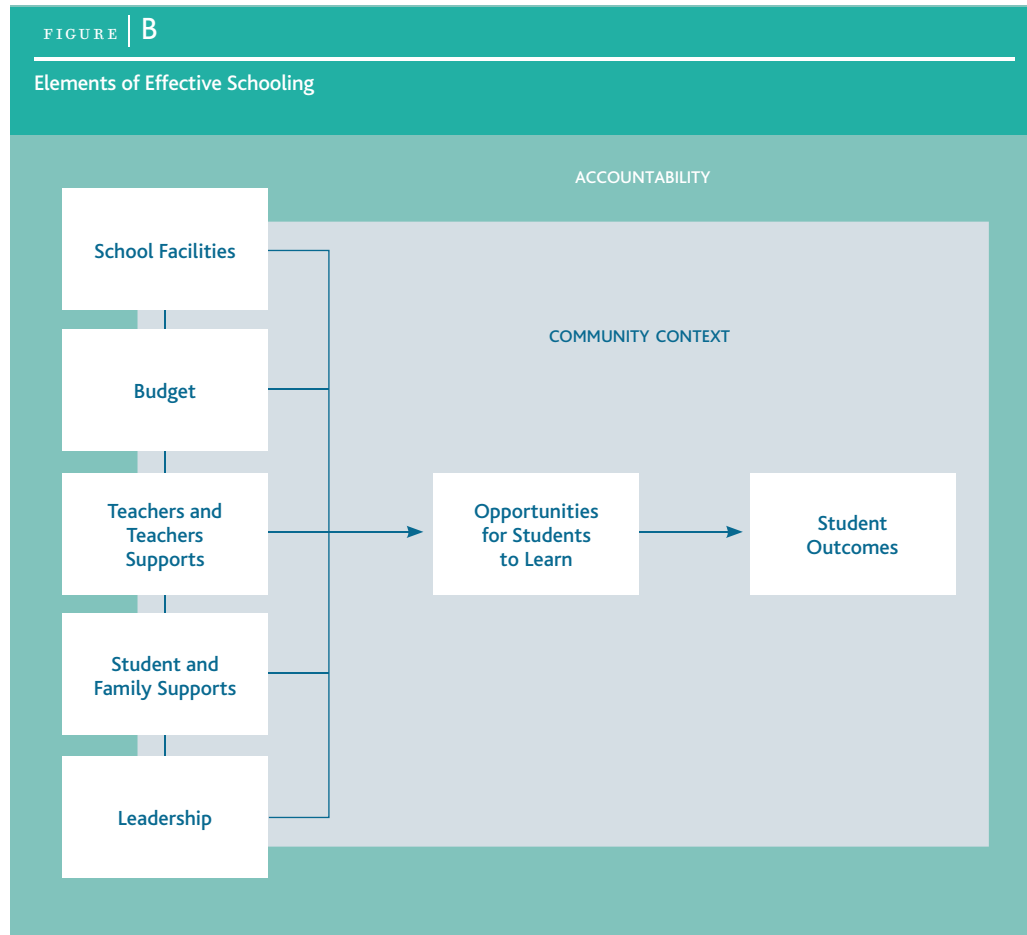
This report is organized into five sections. In this introduction we present a brief overview of *Abbott v. Burke*, the Abbott Indicators Project, and the general approach of the report. Section 1 includes a profile of the community served by the school district and of the students attending the schools. Sections 2 through 4 are organized by Abbott remedy: preschool, K-12 education (including stan-

dards-based reform and additional supports for students and families), and school facilities construction. All of the remedies work together to ensure a seamless plan for school improvement; we present them separately because each has its own distinctive logic and legal framework.

In Sections 2 (The Preschool Program) and 3 (K-12 Education), we present the indicators within a framework of the elements of effective schooling.² The core elements of effective schooling are:

- **Student and Family Supports:** To ensure that all students come to school ready to learn and are equipped to succeed in school, additional supports must be available to meet the unique needs of students and their families;
- **Teacher Qualifications and Supports:** Teachers need to be well-prepared and supported;
- **Budget:** The district must have enough revenue to support a high-quality education;
- **School Facilities Construction:** School facilities must be healthy, safe, and educationally adequate; and
- **Leadership:** School and district leadership should be informed, inclusive, and effective.

Introduction



All of these interlocking features must be in place and functioning well to ensure that there are:

- **Opportunities for Students to Learn:** Opportunities for learning should be effective, developmentally appropriate, aligned to state standards, varied, and enriched.

These elements—and the indicators selected to measure them—are the gauge by which we can assess a school district’s progress to date. The elements of effective schooling are also conditions and characteristics that we can change for the better.

At the end of Sections 2 and 3, we present a range of student outcomes. As Figure B suggests, student well-being and academic success are the end products of all of the elements of effective schooling. We urge readers to view the student outcomes in light of what is presented about the full range of school district practices.

Section 4, School Facilities Construction, contains information about the district’s first-round long-range facilities plans, planning process, and progress to date on state-supported school facilities projects.

The Indicators

Indicators Project staff and colleagues at the Education Law Center worked with a committee of education experts to select a wish list of indicators. We selected indicators that would help to answer a range of questions that stakeholders have about the elements of effective schooling. Presented in this report are all of the indicators we were able to collect that were of sufficiently high quality and enabled comparisons with other districts, over time, or both.

The indicators are comprehensive but by no means exhaustive. We have included all of the information we collected that was reliable and valid. We could not answer all of the questions that education stakeholders have about schooling, however. We recognize and regret that some readers will find some of their most pressing questions unanswered. A complete list of the Abbott indicators appears in an Appendix to this report.

As the indicators are introduced throughout this report, we present:

- Any *requirements* or *standards* under Abbott, or other state or federal law;
- A brief description of its importance to educational effectiveness;
- Where applicable, any *current debates* about its role or importance; and finally
- Indicators findings.

Reading the Tables and Charts

All indicators findings are summarized in the text of this report. Many are also presented in tables or charts. Most tables and charts show trends over time, comparisons between district groupings, or both.

Time trends. Trends over time are clearly labeled in the charts and explained in the text. The length of the trend varies from indicator to indicator depending on the available data. We always included all of the years for which we had reliable data. In all cases, the latest year of data that we report is the last year of data we have. For example, 2002–03 is the most recent year for achievement test results. Statewide 2003–04 results became available weeks before this report was completed, but there was not enough time to include them.

Introduction

Student well-being and academic success are the end products of all the elements of effective schooling.

We invited the districts to submit letters with their updated results. We encourage readers to read the letter(s) and compare all of the data in this report with new information that becomes available.

District groupings. Unless otherwise noted, we compare indicator results for the district—Camden, Newark, Trenton, Union City, in their respective reports—with results for all *other* Abbott districts, the wealthiest suburban districts, and the state.

For these reports, the Abbott districts include the 30 school districts that have received the court-ordered remedies since 1997–98 (see Appendix). A 31st district, Salem, became an Abbott district in Spring 2003–04, but is not included among the Abbott districts.

Differences in resources, educational quality, and student performance between Abbott districts and the wealthiest New Jersey suburbs were central to the *Abbott v. Burke* lawsuits and rulings, so we compare Camden and other Abbott districts to these

school districts on several indicators. In New Jersey, school districts are rated by the New Jersey Department of Education into eight “district factor groups” (DFGs), ranging from A to J. The wealthiest towns are classified as I and J districts; most Abbott districts are classified as DFG A or B. DFGs are based on Census information about the following characteristics of each school district: 1) adult educational attainment level, 2) adult occupation, 3) population density, 4) income, 5) unemployment, and 6) poverty. Throughout this report, we refer to these school districts interchangeably as the “wealthiest suburbs,” “most successful suburban districts,” and the “I and J” districts.

After the pilot district, the other Abbotts, and the wealthiest suburbs, the final comparison made in this report is to statewide averages. All public school districts—except vocational, educational services and join-

ture commissions, and charter schools—are included in statewide averages.

Due to space considerations, most indicator findings are reported at the district or district grouping level. In recognition that readers may be interested in a single school or how conditions vary from school to school, we have collected, analyzed, and prepared a number of school-level tables and charts when appropriate information was available. The Education Law Center will make these available to school boards, district and school staff, and other groups representing community stakeholders.

Data definitions. The tables and charts in this report present summary statistics for each district grouping described above. The method we used to summarize the findings is generally indicated in the tables and charts. Detailed data sources and definitions of terms are included in an Appendix to this report.

Data collection and analysis. A summary of data collection and analysis methods is contained in an Appendix to this report.

Summaries

Key indicator findings are summarized in the Executive Summary and at the end of the report sections. Sections 1 through 3 contain text and table summaries—Section 4 includes a text summary only. Summary tables include the subset of indicators that have measurable standards or requirements under Abbott or other state or federal law. Summary tables list these requirements along with the status of the district on each.

Endnotes

2. We thank Fred Frelow of the Rockefeller Foundation for suggesting this approach.

3. More information about *Abbott v. Burke* is available at www.edlawcenter.org.

Research shows that living in concentrated poverty negatively affects the well-being and academic performance of children and youth. If our schools are to help all students meet the state's academic standards and grow up to take meaningful roles in their communities, these effects will need to be countered. In this section, we present indicators of community distress that inform the elements of effective schooling.

1

1

The Community and Students

FIGURE | 1.1

Conditions of Living and Learning in Camden

Municipal Characteristics	Camden	New Jersey
Population	79,904	8,414,350
Female Head of Household Families With Children 17 and Under	58%	18%
Highest Educational Attainment of Adults 25 and Over		
Less Than High School Diploma	49%	18%
Diploma or GED	29%	29%
Some College	17%	23%
Bachelor's Degree	4%	19%
Graduate or Professional Degree	2%	11%
Labor Force Participation	50%	64%
Unemployment Rate	15.9%	5.8%
Median Household Income	\$23,421	\$55,146
Population Below Poverty Level	36%	8%
Population 17 and Under Below Poverty Level	45%	11%
Rent-income Ratio	30%	26%
Renter-occupied Housing	54%	34%
Violent Crime Rate (Per 1000)	18.6	3.8

SOURCE | Uniform Crime Report, 2002; 2000 US Census.

Camden, located in Camden County, is a small city with a land area of about nine square miles and a population of about 80,000.

Figure 1.1 shows the gaps between the City of Camden and the state average on several indicators. For example, fewer adults are in the labor force and unemployment is almost three times as high in Camden as in the state as a whole. Not surprisingly, household income is less than half of the state median. More than one in three adults and nearly half of children under the age of 17 lived below the poverty level in Camden in 2000.

Although many single mothers are economically successful, a large percentage of female-headed family households remains a strong indicator of community poverty. Figure 1.1 shows that 58 percent of Camden's families are lead by single mothers compared to 18 percent statewide. As parents, high school dropouts may be less trusting of schools and have fewer of their own academic skills to support their children's learning. Almost half of Camden's adults have not earned a high school diploma. Finally, exposure to

violence can have negative effects on child and youth mental health. It also increases their risk of being victims of violent crime. At 18.6 per thousand, the violent crime rate in Camden is almost five times higher than it is throughout the state on average.

The students who attend the public schools reflect the families who live in Camden. Their unique characteristics inform the educational content, the staff needed to teach and support teaching, the space and facilities in which teaching and learning occur, and the leadership that guides the whole educational process. Programs that meet the needs of Camden's children and youth—such as bilingual programs and nutrition programs—also have different budget needs.

Nearly 80 percent of Camden's students are eligible for free- or reduced-price lunch under the National School Lunch Program, compared to about two thirds in the remaining Abbott districts (Figure 1.2). In 2003–04, 244 children in Camden (1.4%) did not have a permanent home. As in many of New Jersey's poorest cities, most of Camden's students are

children of color: 54 percent are Black and 43 percent Latino/a.

Families move between neighborhoods and into and out of cities, so some amount of student mobility is unavoidable. Students who move between districts or schools often have to “catch up” with their classmates and teachers must spend time to bring them up to date. When many children move into and out of a district, it can disrupt educational progress and affect test scores and student learning. In Camden, student mobility is high with over 5,000, or almost one in three students moving into or out of their school during the school year. Actual student mobility may be even higher, because districts may not count individual students leaving and returning to the same school several times throughout the year as multiple incidents.

In Camden, student mobility is high with almost one in three students moving into or out of their school each year.

1

The Community And The Students

FIGURE | 1.2

Characteristics of Students in Camden

	Camden	All Other Abbott Districts	I and J Districts	New Jersey
Total Enrollment	18,982	—	—	—
Eligible for Free-/Reduced-price Lunch	79.0%	67.8%	3.3%	26.2%
Race/Ethnicity				
Black	54.1%	40.9%	4.4%	17.1%
Latino/a	42.9%	42.2%	3.6%	17.1%
White	1.1%	13.6%	80.3%	58.5%
Asian	1.7%	2.9%	11.5%	7.1%
Native American	0.1%	0.2%	0.1%	0.2%
Limited English Proficiency (LEP)	6.7%	11.9%	1.5%	4.8%
Students with Disabilities (IEP)	12.0%	12.6%	12.0%	13.1%
Homeless	1.4%	—	—	—
Student Mobility Rate	31.8%	22.2%	5.2%	12.2%

SOURCE | Fall Survey, 2003-04; School Report Card, 2002-03; Camden Public Schools, 2003-04

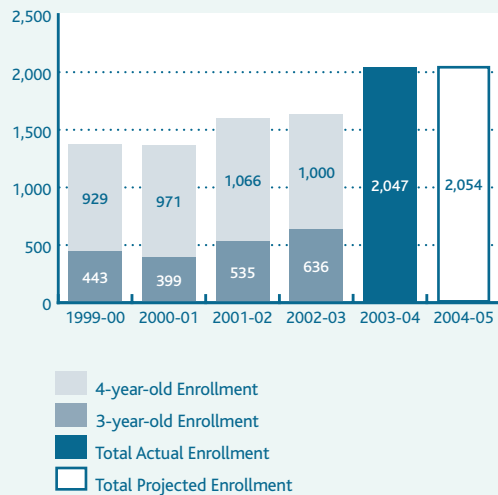
The Abbott preschool remedy is based on research showing that intensive, high-quality preschool programs can help children perform better in school and participate more productively in the life of their communities as adults. Abbott preschool began in 1999–2000; by 2005–06, all Abbott districts are required to serve 90 percent of the eligible population.

2

The Preschool Program

FIGURE | 2.1

Preschool Enrollment: Camden, 1999–00 to 2004–05



SOURCE | New Jersey Department of Education: Office of Early Childhood Programs, 2003; New Jersey Department of Education: Office of School Funding, 1999–2003.

Abbott Overview

The major features of the Abbott preschool mandate are:

- Six-hour school day, 180 days a year;
- Provisions for full-day, full-year wrap-around child care services;⁴
- Certified teacher and an assistant for each class;
- Maximum class size of 15 students;
- Adequate facilities;
- Transportation, health and other related services, as needed;
- Developmentally appropriate curriculum that meets the state's Early Childhood Education Program Expectations Standards of Quality and is linked with New Jersey's Core Curriculum Content Standards (CCCS);
- Adequate state funding for all programs; and
- All three- and four-year-old children residing in the school district are eligible, with enrollment on demand.⁵

Opportunities for Students to Learn

Program Enrollment

To meet Abbott requirements, each district must serve at least 90 percent of its eligible preschool population by 2005–06. Figures

2.1 and 2.2 show the progress made by the Camden Board of Education toward serving the community's three- and four-year-olds. Camden preschools served 2,047 children in 2003–04, or 72 percent of the estimated number of three- and four-year-olds living in the city. Camden was expected to serve 73 percent of the eligible population in 2004–05. The two major obstacles to universal enrollment are: 1) finding and informing hard-to-reach parents of three- and four-year-olds; and 2) identifying and upgrading space and facilities. Camden's outreach efforts are discussed below; preschool facilities are discussed in Section 5.

Early childhood staff told us in May 2004 that the district was at about 95 percent capacity: all of the other private provider programs were full, but the district-run programs still had available slots. District staff told us that they intended to open more classrooms in 2004–05; however, it was unclear how they planned to do so.

The district typically enrolls a greater percentage of four-year-olds than three-year-

olds in its own programs. A district representative reported that the Camden preschools believe they have enrolled all of the city's eligible four-year-olds.

Program Setting

Abbott districts can operate their own preschool programs or enter into contracts with private provider and Head Start programs. There are two types of Head Start programs: Enhanced Head Start, the program under which existing Head Start seats are upgraded to meet Abbott standards; and Expanded Head Start, the program serving children previously not enrolled in the Federal Head Start program.

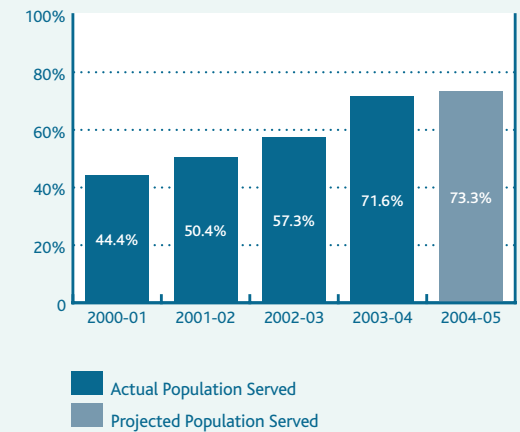
The Camden Board of Education contracted with 24 other private providers to offer Abbott preschool in 36 sites in 2004–05 (including two Head Start programs in five sites). The district runs 20 preschool programs in its own buildings including the Early Childhood Development Center, which is divided between two campuses (Mount Calvary and Mount Ephraim). As a rule, Camden four-

year-olds attend district-run programs, and three-year-olds attend preschool in a private provider settings. Since the Abbott preschool program began in 1999–00, the district has placed more children in community-run programs than in district-run programs. The percentage of children served in community programs has grown over the years: 69 percent were in community programs in 2002–03 compared to 58 percent in 1999–00 (Figure 2.3).

According to the district, in 2004–05, there were over 500 additional children enrolled in local Head Start programs that were not under contract with the district. The district cited several barriers that needed to be overcome before these programs can meet Abbott standards and officially become part of the district's preschool program. These items included inadequate space and facilities, insufficient number of teacher-mentors to help teachers meet certification requirements, lack of tuition assistance for teachers to earn graduate school credits, and a need for full-year operation (these Head Start programs

FIGURE | 2.2

Preschool Population Served: Camden, 2000–01 to 2004–05



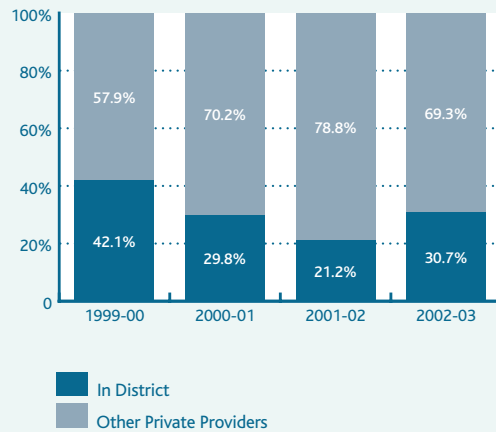
SOURCE | New Jersey Department of Education: Office of Early Childhood Programs, 2003; New Jersey Department of Education: Office of School Funding, 1999–2003.

2

The Preschool Program

FIGURE | 2.3

Preschool Enrollment by Provider Type:
Camden, 1999–00 to 2002–03



SOURCE | New Jersey Department of Education: Office of Early Childhood Programs, 2003; New Jersey Department of Education: Office of School Funding, 1999–2003.

were closed in August). If the Camden Board of Education were able to contract with these additional Head Start agencies, its preschool enrollment would just about meet the state's 90 percent enrollment requirement.

Recruitment and Outreach

If districts are to reach the Abbott goal of 90 percent enrollment, they need to identify unserved families and obstacles to enrollment and then conduct intensive outreach and recruitment efforts. Some promising methods for reaching parents of three- and four-year-olds include: door-to-door visits; distributing informational brochures in places that families with young children frequent, such as churches, neighborhood centers, and pediatricians; placing public service announcements on local television, newspapers, and public transportation; and hanging banners on the preschool buildings. It is important that outreach materials and communications be clear and culturally sensitive.

The Camden Board of Education reported that it had no waiting list for the 2004–05

preschool year. According to district staff, all Camden parents who wanted their children in the district's preschool program were able to enroll them. The district believes that all of the eligible four-year-olds in the district are currently served in the district's preschool program with the exception of those enrolled in the non-Abbott Head Start programs.

The early childhood department has not conducted a formal survey to determine the number or identity of eligible children who are not enrolled, nor has it identified the obstacles to their enrollment. District staff have heard that some parents with three-year-olds prefer to keep them at home or with relatives rather than put them in school. They believed this practice to be more common among Latino parents, although they have not identified reasons why this might be.

Over the years, the district's preschool recruitment strategies have included radio and television announcements, distribution of flyers (in Spanish and English), and door-to-door visits. The Camden Board of Education has partnered with a local organization

serving Latino families to conduct outreach since the program's outset. The Camden Board of Education has clearly made progress in enrolling children in the five years since the preschool program began. Despite these efforts, in 2004–05, about one in four eligible children in Camden would not be enrolled according to estimates made by the New Jersey Department of Education.⁶ Community reviewers noted that reaching the remaining families with preschool-age children will require that the district identify those parents and collect information about the barriers to enrollment. Reaching the remaining children is likely to be more difficult and expensive than the district's efforts to date.

Programs for Children with Disabilities

Federal and state laws guide the education of individuals with disabilities.⁷ The law requires that children with disabilities be educated in the "least restrictive environment." This means that, to the maximum extent possible, students are educated in the school they would have attended if they did not have a disability,

and participate in academic, nonacademic, and extracurricular activities with students who do not have disabilities. The general education classroom is the preferred placement for children with disabilities; however, school districts must also offer a range of alternative services for students who cannot be educated in the general education classroom for part or all of the day. The law also states that children with disabilities should only be placed in separate classes or schools, or removed from the general education classroom when the nature or severity of the disability prevents them from being educated in the general education classroom, even with the use of supplemental aids and services.

Identification of preschoolers with disabilities. Before children with disabilities can receive the educational programs and services they need, they must be identified and evaluated. One way for this to happen is through the Early Intervention System, a statewide system of services for infants and toddlers, birth to age three, with developmental delays or disabilities, and their families. The New

2

The Preschool Program

Jersey Department of Health and Senior Services oversees this system. The Camden Child Study Team works closely with early intervention case managers to transition young children with disabilities into the preschool environment. Traditionally, case managers contact the district several months before the child's third birthday to schedule a transition meeting attended by a member of the preschool Child Study Team, the case manager, and the child's parent or guardian. The full Child Study Team made up of the school psychologist, social worker, and learning disabilities teacher-consultant then meets to plan the district's evaluations. An initial evaluation is conducted in order to determine a child's eligibility for special education and related services. Evaluation results shape the Individualized Education Program (IEP) that specifies the child's needs for special education and related services, and determines the setting where the child will be educated. In practice, meetings are frequently combined in Camden because of problems contacting

parents and getting them to come to the district office.

Children suspected of having a disability can be identified prior to enrolling in preschool. Each child is also given a series of developmental screenings by his or her classroom teacher. Camden uses the Early Screening Inventory-Revised to screen every child who enters the program. The results are used to identify students who need additional support services.

Along with special education teachers, Child Study Team members introduce preschoolers with disabilities and their families to their new classrooms and discuss classroom supports. Children with disabilities in Camden may be placed in general education classrooms or classrooms with other special needs children (also known as "self-contained programs"). Self-contained programs for children with disabilities are located at the district's Early Childhood Development Center.

Educational environment. The law requires schools and districts to provide

children with disabilities with appropriate educational experiences and quality services that are tailored to their individual needs. While the law does not specify a target percentage of children who should be in general education classrooms, it does state that children with disabilities must be educated in inclusive, rather than separate settings for as much time as possible. According to a report released by the New Jersey Council on Developmental Disabilities, the state of New Jersey lags behind the nation in the percentage of preschoolers with disabilities educated in an inclusionary setting. In 2002, about one in four (22%) New Jersey preschoolers with disabilities was placed in general education classrooms, compared to 35 percent nationwide. In light of the state norm, we might expect to see similar educational placements in Camden and the other Abbott districts.⁸

Figures 2.4 and 2.5 below show the percentage of preschoolers with disabilities in various educational environments—in Camden and all other Abbott districts, respectively. In 2003–04, over 90 percent of

Camden’s 186 preschoolers with disabilities were in self-contained (special education) classrooms compared to two thirds of similar students in the other 29 Abbott districts. Seven percent of Camden’s preschoolers were in inclusion programs compared to nine percent in the other Abbott districts.

Camden has one current and one future strategy to reduce the number of preschoolers with disabilities educated in self-contained classrooms. In 2003–04, the district hired a Preschool Intervention and Referral Team to assist children with behavioral or learning difficulties and prevent unnecessary referrals to the Child Study Team. As a result, there has been a 23 percent reduction in the number of referrals, from a high of 240 in 1999 to 184 in 2004. The second strategy will be implemented in September 2006 when the new Early Childhood Development Center is slated to open. The district plans to staff inclusion classrooms with both general education and special education teachers in the new building.

FIGURE | 2.4

Educational Environment of Preschoolers with Disabilities:
Camden, 2003–04 (N=186)

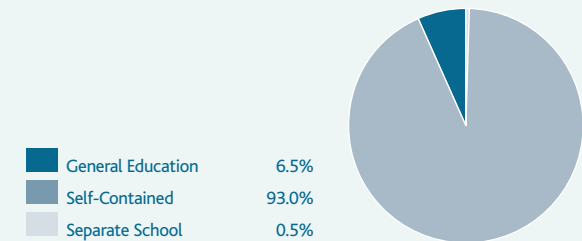
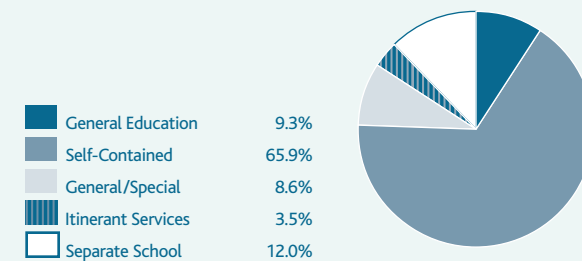


FIGURE | 2.5

Educational Environment of Preschoolers with Disabilities:
All Other Abbott Districts, 2003–04



*Home and residential placements, less than one percent.

SOURCE | New Jersey Department of Education: Office of Early Childhood Programs, 2003; New Jersey Department of Education, Office of Special Education, 1999–2003.

2

The Preschool Program

The law requires schools and districts to provide children with disabilities with educational experiences and quality services that are tailored to meet their needs.

Program Content

New Jersey Department of Education's *Early Childhood Education Program Expectations: Standards of Quality* set standards for learning outcomes and outlines how teachers should conduct specific activities. Since they were released in 2002–03, the *Expectations* have become the benchmark for determining how effectively the classroom curriculum is being implemented.

Curriculum. Specialists in early childhood education debate if it is better to have a single curriculum across a district or if providers should be allowed to select their own curricula. On one hand, a single curriculum ensures that students in a district with high student mobility like Camden will receive the same program no matter where they move. Professional development is also easier to provide when there is a uniform curriculum. On the other hand, uniformity is not as important as using research-based, developmentally appropriate programs that provide enough teacher support to ensure quality instruction. Program and teacher buy-in are also impor-

tant to ensure good implementation. Below, we describe the approach taken by district and other private provider programs in Camden.

In the years before Abbott when the district operated a small preschool program, it used the Scholastic preschool curriculum. Scholastic emphasizes learning through play and provides children with opportunities to learn in areas such as: social/emotional development, health and safety, physical education, language arts, math, science, and social studies.

Camden's early childhood administrators review the preschool curriculum on an annual basis. Until recently, the district purchased curriculum supplements and provided additional professional development to teachers to ensure that the curriculum was meeting the state's *Expectations*. In 2003–04, the district began a search for a new curriculum; in 2004–05, it adopted and began implementing Bank Street in the district-run programs. The Bank Street Model (also known as the Developmental-Interaction Approach) was developed by the New York-

based college of education of the same name. It views children as active learners and helps them develop physically, socially, emotionally, and cognitively.

The transition into Kindergarten. The transition from preschool to Kindergarten can be stressful for young children as they leave a familiar, comfortable setting for one that is new and different. Successful transition is most likely to happen when children have been prepared ahead of time, parents have been involved in the process, and preschool and Kindergarten teachers communicate on a regular basis. Below, we compare best practices in preschool-Kindergarten transition with transition activities in Camden.

The National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) provides preschool programs with four recommendations to guide transition efforts: 1) ensure program continuity; 2) maintain ongoing communication and cooperation among staff in sending and receiving programs; 3) prepare children for transition; and 4) involve parents in transition planning.

Abbott districts are required to include in their three-year operational plans a plan for transition of children from the preschool program to Kindergarten. Camden district staff have activities to provide a smooth transition from preschool to Kindergarten. Children enrolled in Head Start and other private provider programs visit Kindergarten classrooms and attend assembly programs and art shows at their neighborhood elementary school. Students attending district-run preschool programs do not undergo this orientation because it is assumed that they are already familiar with their schools.

Kindergarten teachers attend workshops where they receive information so that they are familiar with preschool curriculum and activities. Preschool teachers are expected to discuss with Kindergarten teachers how best to transition their program graduates. However, the district does not schedule official meetings on the preschool to Kindergarten transition. Kindergarten teachers receive the records of transitioning students at the start of a new school year and assess students' skills

2

The Preschool Program

with readiness tests. Some preschool teachers also develop portfolios of students' work to send to Kindergarten with the child. The district is waiting for the New Jersey Department of Education to issue guidance and standards for compiling and assessing student work before implementing this practice districtwide.

Student and Family Supports

Health services. When parents register their children for preschool, they provide their child's medical history on a form. Physical examinations, dental care, and vision and hearing screenings are provided to every preschooler in the district, including children attending community provider preschool programs. Students with speech, language and hearing difficulties are assessed and provided with needed services. Physical and occupational therapy is also available for children who need them. School nurses are district employees who work with family workers at each program site to assess the needs of preschool families. The Center for Family Services is the local agency respon-

sible for supervising family workers. Students with emotional and behavioral problems are referred to the district's Child Study Team and/or to specialized community agencies when necessary.

The Department of Human Services runs an early childhood and parent education program known as "Parents as Teachers". The program focuses on supporting the development of preschoolers by giving parents information on topics such as child development and growth, literacy, and positive discipline.

Transportation. Students are typically placed in preschool programs located in their neighborhoods. The district provides transportation for children with disabilities and other children attending programs far from their homes. Such placements occur when programs that are more conveniently located are already full.

Program Quality

The New Jersey Department of Education formed the Early Learning Improvement Consortium (ELIC), a group of university-

based preschool specialists, to conduct ongoing research on program quality. In 2002–03, the state funded ELIC to assess 310 Abbott preschool classrooms throughout New Jersey. ELIC rated these classrooms on the Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale (ECERS-R). Although the Camden preschool program took part in the ELIC study, we do not present the findings here, because too few Camden preschool classrooms were included to enable anyone to draw conclusions about the district’s program quality.

All New Jersey districts with a public preschool program are required to undergo self-evaluation, using a guide called the Self-Assessment Validation System (SAVS) developed by the Office of Early Childhood Education at the New Jersey Department of Education. Districts used it for the first time in 2003–04. The results are intended for use in planning the district’s programs. The program quality assessment is one important section of the SAVS. Although the state encourages districts to use tools like the ECERS-R, it is not required.

Education program specialists in Camden assess classroom quality in all district classrooms with the ECERS-R. The results are used to improve quality and guide teacher professional development. The ECERS-R results were not complied and could not be made available for this report.

ELIC staff we spoke with said that they have been working with district master teachers (called education program specialists in Camden) on the use of the ECERS-R, along with the Supports for Early Literacy Assessment (SELA) and the Preschool Classroom Mathematics Inventory (PCMI) to assess instructional quality.⁹ They also said that more program quality data will become available in 2005. We think that the best way to understand the strengths, weaknesses, and challenges confronted by Abbott preschool programs is to have a consistent and reliable method of measuring program quality that is used regularly in all public preschool programs, including the Abbott districts.

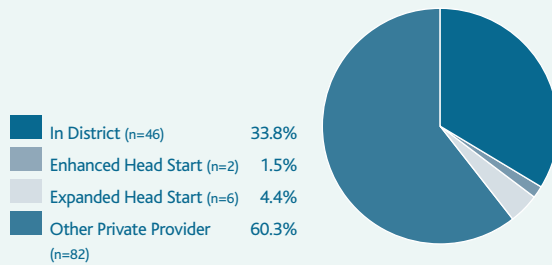
More data on program quality are needed so that we can understand the strengths, weaknesses and challenges confronted by Abbott preschool programs.

2

The Preschool Program

FIGURE | 2.6

Preschool Teachers by Provider Type: Camden, 2004–05



SOURCE | Camden Board of Education, 2004–05

Preschool Teacher Qualifications and Supports

As expected, a majority of Camden’s preschool teachers work in Head Start or other private provider programs. In 2004–05, there are 136 preschool teachers: six percent in Head Start; 60 percent in other community programs, and 34 percent in Camden public school buildings.

Educational Attainment of Preschool Teachers

All Abbott preschool teachers are required to have a bachelor’s degree. This standard applied immediately to teachers in district-run programs. Teachers in community programs who needed fewer than 30 credits were eligible for an extension until September 2006. Head Start teachers have four years from the date when their program first contracted with the Abbott district to complete these requirements.

Postsecondary training can equip teachers with the knowledge and skills they need to be effective in the classroom. We present information about the educational attainment of Abbott preschool teachers as a proxy

for teacher preparedness and because Abbott requires all preschool teachers to have undergraduate degrees. We present the findings by provider type so that we can see how well teachers in different settings have progressed toward meeting the degree requirement.

Almost all of Camden’s preschool teachers had earned at least a four-year college degree by 2004–05 as required by the state. Figure 2.7 shows that Camden’s preschool teachers in every setting have either met or are well on their way to meeting this state requirement by September 2006.

Preschool Teacher Certification

In addition to earning a bachelor’s degree, Abbott preschool teachers must also be certified.¹⁰ The New Jersey Department of Education considers the preschool through Grade 3 certification (P-3) to be the standard for all new teachers entering Abbott preschool programs. One route teachers can use to earn the P-3 is to first obtain a provisional “certificate of eligibility” (CE) or a certificate of eligibility with advanced standing (CEAS). While teach-

ing in a preschool program, teachers then complete a series of mentoring and evaluation sessions. CE candidates must also take part in early childhood instructional training. Teachers with a standard certificate to teach students in nursery school through Grade 8 (N-8) and at least two years of full-time teaching experience in an early childhood setting also fulfill the certification requirement under a “grandfather clause” in the regulations. Teachers with special education certification may only teach self-contained early childhood classrooms or serve as a second teacher in an inclusion classroom. Teachers with N-8 and special education certificates are not required to obtain the specialized education and training in early childhood education that the P-3 certification process provides.

Figure 2.8 shows the status of the Camden preschool program in 2004–05 on the road toward 100-percent teacher certification. Overall, 55 percent have provisional (CE or CEAS) or preschool to Grade 3 (P-3) certification; 24 percent have N-8 certification; and 17 percent are special education certified. (All

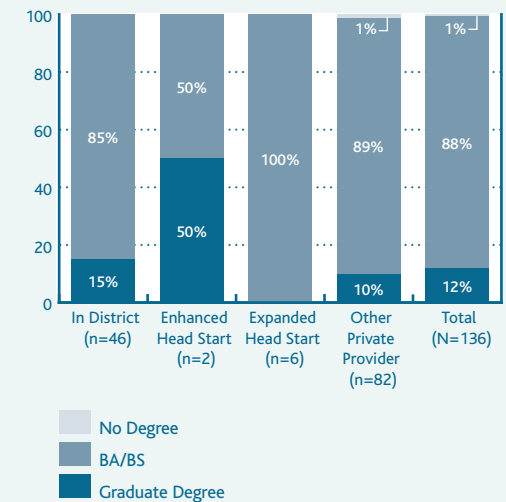
special education teachers currently teach in self-contained classrooms.) All six (100%) Expanded Head Start teachers have earned full P-3 certification. The two Enhanced Head Start teachers have provisional certification. Most of the 82 teachers working in other private provider programs have at least provisional certification: 51 percent have P-3, 27 percent have certificates of eligibility (regular or advanced standing), and 16 percent have N-8. All 46 of the preschool teachers working in district-run programs have fulfilled the certification requirement: 44 percent have N-8, seven percent have P-3, and 50 percent are special education certified.

Preschool Teacher Experience

Figure 2.9 shows how long teachers in Camden’s preschool program have served as lead preschool teachers. As of October 2004, Camden preschool teachers had 7.8 years of experience on average. Teachers in district-run programs had 12.3 years as lead preschool teachers. (Years of experience gained before the Abbott program began were probably as

FIGURE | 2.7

Preschool Teacher Educational Attainment:
Camden, 2004–05



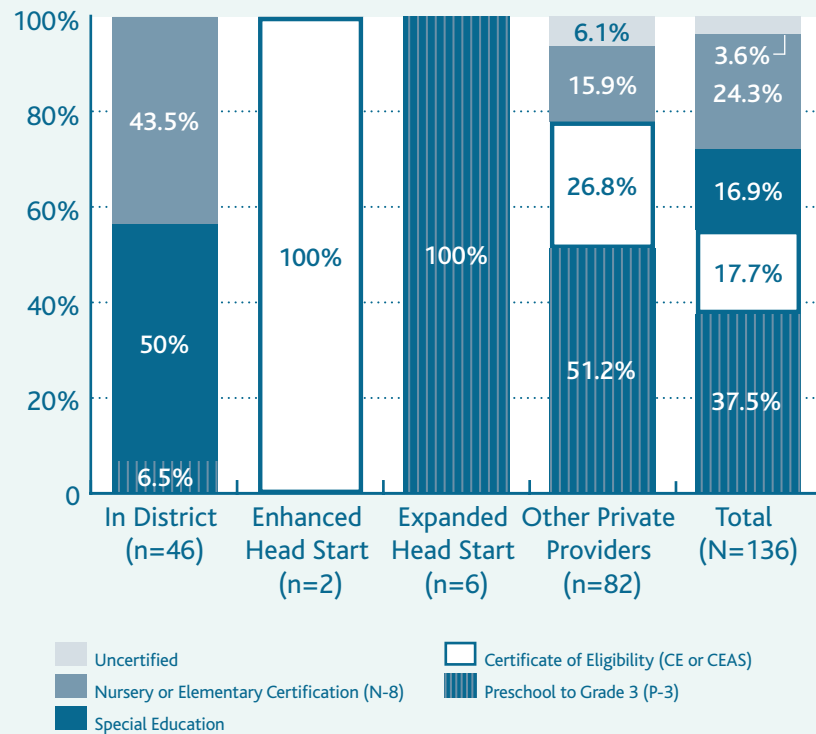
SOURCE | Camden Board of Education, 2004–05

2

The Preschool Program

FIGURE | 2.8

Preschool Teacher Certification by Provider Type: Camden, 2004–05



SOURCE | Camden Board of Education, 2004-05

lead teachers in Head Start or other private provider programs.) Teachers in Camden's other private provider programs had about five years of similar experience; Enhanced Head Start teachers had 15 years; and Expanded Head Start teachers had nine.

Preschool Teacher Salary

All other things being equal, school districts that pay teachers well are more likely to attract a broader pool of applicants for teaching positions. Improving preschool teacher pay may also help to improve preschool program quality by reducing teacher turnover and boosting teacher morale. The New Jersey Supreme Court recognized this in 2002 when it ordered the New Jersey Department of Education to provide funds to help Head Start and other private provider programs raise their teacher salaries to levels equal to those of teachers in district-run programs. Here, we present the average preschool teacher salary in Camden by provider type to compare salaries paid in these settings. There should be no systematic difference by provider type because all pro-

viders should have access to applicant pools of equivalent size and quality and because Abbott preschool teachers do equivalent work regardless of setting.

The average preschool teacher salary in Camden for 2004–05 is \$44,865. Teachers in district-run programs earned higher salaries than those in other private provider programs (\$52,859 compared to \$40,816). The district reports that all teachers are paid on the same salary scale. Teachers in district-run programs had several more years of experience as lead preschool teachers than their counterparts in the other provider types (with the exception of the two teachers in Enhanced Head Start programs).¹¹

Performance Evaluation

Even the best teachers benefit from informed peer and supervisor feedback. Such feedback and direction is even more important to ensure that less experienced and less skilled teachers do a better job. Some of this feedback can happen on an informal basis. But some should be part of a more formal proce-

dure known in many professions as “performance evaluation.”

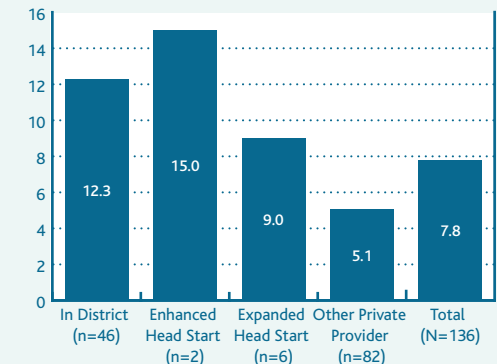
In Camden, the early childhood education supervisor and master teachers (called education program specialists in Camden) conduct formal staff evaluations. Teachers in district-run, Head Start, and other private provider programs who are not yet certified are evaluated three times per year. Certified teachers receive a yearly evaluation. Teachers are evaluated on their level of professionalism, classroom behavior management, and lesson planning.

Professional Development

In addition to feedback, teachers also benefit from opportunities to continue learning through activities such as outside conferences, in-school workshops, weekly teacher meetings, and coaching and mentoring from peers and supervisors. In these sessions, teachers share experiences and exchange ideas with colleagues; improve their teaching skills; and learn about current issues in education. No matter how many years of ex-

FIGURE | 2.9

Preschool Teacher Average Years as a Lead Teacher by Provider Type: Camden, 2004–05



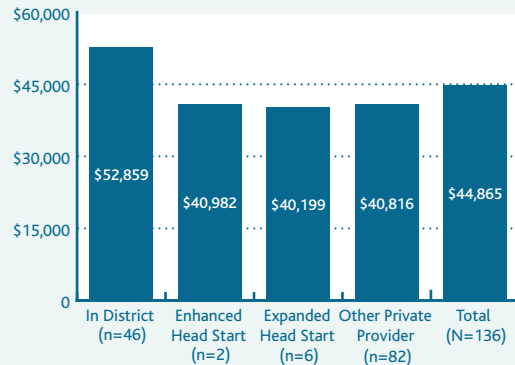
SOURCE | Camden Board of Education, 2004–05

2

The Preschool Program

FIGURE | 2.10

Average Preschool Teacher Salary: Camden, 2004–05



SOURCE | Camden Board of Education, 2004–05

perience they have, teachers must be willing to update their knowledge and skills in order to keep up with the changing times. When teachers take part in ongoing high-quality staff development focused on instruction, classroom practice improves.

District staff told us that master teachers make weekly rounds to observe Camden's preschool classrooms. For every teacher, master teachers use the results of the Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale (ECERS-R), Supports for Early Literacy Assessment (SELA) and the Preschool Mathematics Inventory (PCMI)¹² to assess instructional quality, identify teacher strengths, and areas in need of improvement. If a teacher scores below a five on the ECERS-R—which would indicate 'good' overall program quality—the master teacher develops a corrective action plan and supports the teacher in improving his or her classroom performance. The master teacher repeats the ECERS-R assessment to assess the effectiveness of the corrective action plan. New preschool teachers are also encouraged to observe more experienced

teachers; master teachers typically accompany them on these classroom visits to point out specific skills and techniques.

In September 2003, the Camden Board of Education, in collaboration with Rutgers University, received a \$1.2 million grant from the Knight Foundation to provide ongoing professional development to early childhood staff and families. The goal of the program is to improve early literacy and language skills. In 2003–04, Camden preschool teachers participated in workshops on topics such as: the *Expectations*, parent involvement, classroom behavior management, and curriculum and assessment (including the use of portfolios).

Four things play a role in what professional development activities the district selects for its preschool teachers: district goals, the *Expectations*, teacher requests, staff feedback (via focus groups and evaluations of previous in-service workshops), and classroom quality assessments. Teacher performance evaluation also informs staff development.

We should note that while this information does give us a sense of the types of profes-

sional development opportunities offered to Camden preschool teachers, it does not allow us to adequately assess the quality of these activities.

Preschool Budget

The Abbott preschool program is funded by the state from two different sources. Early Childhood Program Aid (ECPA) is allocated to all Abbott districts and another 102 school districts serving low-income students. Since 2002–03, Abbott districts also receive Preschool Expansion Aid (PSEA) to cover the costs of expanding the programs to meet full enrollment.

Figures 2.11 and 2.12 below show the amount of preschool aid received by Camden and all other Abbott districts in 2002–03 and 2003–04. In 2002–03, Camden received a total of \$7,377 per preschooler, \$5,829 from ECPA, and \$1,548 from PSEA.¹³ In that year, Camden’s preschool program received fewer dollars per student from both sources than did the average of all other Abbott districts.

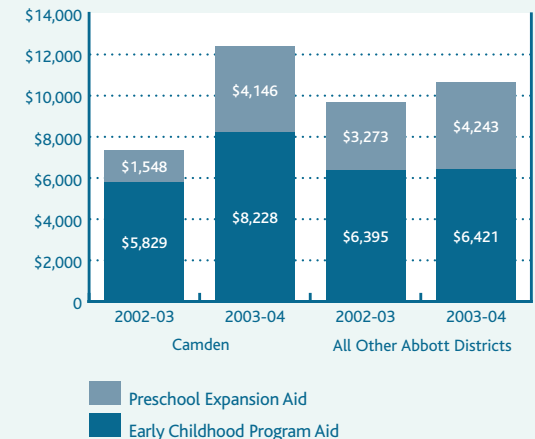
Camden saw a sizable funding increase in 2003–04 to \$12,374 per preschooler, exceeding the amount of the other Abbott districts. When asked to explain this substantial increase, district staff told us that it had been instructed by the New Jersey Department of Education to include special education costs in its 2003–04 preschool budget. Normally, special education costs are funded through another source of state aid. Indeed, the state instructed the Camden Board of Education to remove special education costs from the 2004–05 budget. In 2003–04, the district also added preschool intervention teams to assist children with learning difficulties and prevent unnecessary referrals to the child study team.

Preschool Leadership

State regulations require each Abbott school district to organize and convene an Early Childhood Education Advisory Council (ECEAC). The ECEAC is a group of community stakeholders who are interested in the

FIGURE | 2.11

Per Student Preschool Aid by Source: Camden and All Other Abbott Districts, 2002–03 and 2003–04



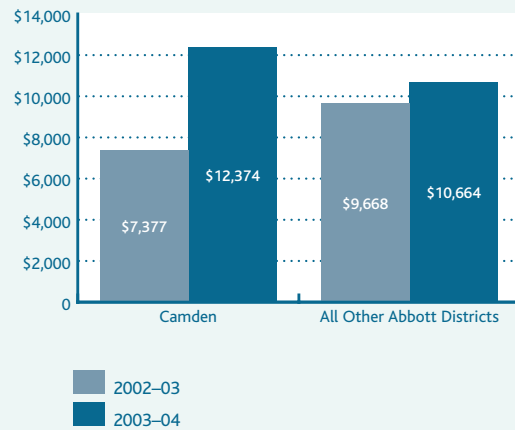
SOURCE | New Jersey Department of Education, Office of School Funding, 2002–2004

2

The Preschool Program

FIGURE | 2.12

Per Student Preschool Aid: Camden and All Other Abbott Districts, 2002–03 and 2003–04



SOURCE | New Jersey Department of Education, Office of School Funding, 2002–2004

education and welfare of preschool-age children. The purpose of the ECEAC is to meet regularly, review the school district's progress towards full implementation of high-quality preschool programs, and participate in program planning, budget development, and early childhood facilities planning.

Camden City's Early Childhood Education Advisory Council (ECEAC) was formed during the 2003–04 school year. It is made up of district early childhood supervisors, a parent and community involvement specialist, teachers, parents, elementary school principals, and representatives from the Mayor's Office, Rutgers University, the Hispanic Family Council, the Division of Family Development (DFD), United Way, private providers, mental health agencies, and churches. Members serve for at least two years. District staff told us that meetings are held monthly.

Before the formation of the ECEAC, the district had an advisory committee made up of early childhood program directors, who reviewed changes made to the district's Three-Year Preschool Operational Plan and

provided comments. In the short-term, this new ECEAC was slated to take part in the selection of the new preschool curriculum and the development of the 2005–06 budget. The ECEAC has also identified four long-term goals: 1) participate in the development of the Three-Year Operational Plan; 2) increase the participation of parents, guardians, and other family members; 3) facilitate communication between the district, families, and other city agencies; and 4) educate community members about the benefits of high-quality preschool.

Preschool Student Outcomes

We turn now to the outcomes of the Abbott preschool program to ask if the elements we have discussed so far—student and family characteristics, program scope and curriculum, teacher qualifications and supports, and leadership—have worked together to improve student learning among the district's three- and four-year-olds. As a recent report published by the United States Government

Accountability Office noted, New Jersey’s public preschools do not currently generate consistent and reliable information that will help us to understand how well children are doing statewide.

Camden’s preschoolers are assessed regularly, although these assessments are not used to evaluate the district’s preschool program overall. Instead, they are used to ensure that students receive the proper services and instruction customized to their needs. In keeping with the Bank Street philosophy followed by the district, all teachers are required to observe and record observations on a minimum of three students each day. These observations become part of each child’s student portfolio.

In 2003–04 the New Jersey Department of Education Office of Early Childhood Education began training teachers in a few Abbott districts to use the Early Language Assessment System (ELAS). The system is another assessment intended to help preschool teachers tailor instruction to children’s needs. Camden will be in the last cohort of

districts to be trained by the New Jersey Department of Education in the use of the ELAS in Summer 2005.

It is not yet clear if ELAS can be used to assess how well preschoolers are learning on a district- or statewide basis. Early childhood education specialists are reluctant to do widespread assessment of young children; however, we need to strike a balance between these concerns and the need to know exactly how well the programs are serving Abbott preschoolers. Outcome measures are needed to help stakeholders to identify programs that work and those that need more assistance.

2

The Preschool Program

The Status of Preschool: A Summary

We conclude this section by presenting key findings in two ways. First, we present an overview of the progress made to date and the challenges that lie ahead for Camden's Abbott Preschool Program. We then present a summary table showing the status of the program on a smaller set of indicators alongside relevant standards or requirements under Abbott or other state or federal law.

Opportunities for Students to Learn

- By 2005–06, all Abbott districts are required to enroll 90 percent of their eligible populations of three- and four-year-olds. In 2003–04, the Camden preschool program was near capacity in its existing facilities. Yet, about three-quarters of the city's eligible children were in the preschool program that year. According to district estimates, most of the remaining children were in Head Start programs that had not yet met Abbott standards. Barriers preventing these providers from meeting the standards include insufficient space and facilities and too few teacher-mentors to help their teachers earn certification.
- The law requires that school districts provide children with disabilities with educational expe-

riences and services tailored to their individual needs. For as much time as possible, this education must be in an environment with general education students and not in self-contained settings. Nearly all of Camden's 186 preschoolers with disabilities were educated in self-contained classrooms. The district reports that more inclusion classrooms will be operating in the Early Childhood Development Center, slated to open in Fall 2006.

- More data on program quality—such as the results of reliable measures like the Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale-Revised are needed to help us understand the strengths, weaknesses, and challenges confronted by Abbott preschool programs.

Preschool Teacher Qualifications and Supports

- In 2004–05, nearly all teachers in district-run, Head Start, and other private provider programs had earned their four-year college degrees as required.
- Camden's preschool teachers were on their way to meeting the Abbott certification requirement. In 2004–05, all teachers in district-run and Abbott Head Start programs had at least provisional certification. Five out of 82 teachers (6.1%) in other private provider programs still needed to fulfill this requirement.
- In Camden, the average preschool teacher salary was \$44,865. On average, preschool teachers

in district-run programs earned \$12,000 more than did teachers in any other provider type. Teachers in district-run programs had more years of experience as lead teachers than their counterparts in the other provider types (with the exception of the two teachers in Enhanced Head Start programs). The district reports that all preschool teachers are paid on the same salary scale.

Preschool Student Outcomes

- Public preschool programs in New Jersey do not yet generate consistent and reliable information that will help us to understand how well preschoolers are doing statewide. We need to strike a balance between the concerns of early childhood education specialists about widespread assessment of young children and the need to know exactly how well the programs are serving Abbott preschoolers. Outcome measures are needed to help stakeholders to identify programs that work and those that need more assistance.

FIGURE 2.13	
Abbott Preschool Program: Benchmark Status In Camden	
Benchmark	Status
District teachers required to have bachelor's degree	Met
Head Start teachers have four years from the date their program contracted with district to earn bachelor's degree	Met
District teachers required to have certification	Met
Head Start teachers have four years from the date their program contracted with the district to earn certification.	Met

2

The Preschool Program

Endnotes

4. The New Jersey Department of Education covers the cost for six hours, 180 days per year of preschool education. The New Jersey Department of Human Services funds the mandated before- and after-school “wraparound” care and care during the summer to provide a ten-hour, 245-day per year program.

5. Age eligibility for three- and four-year-olds is based on the date the district uses to determine age eligibility for Kindergarten.

6. It is also important to note that New Jersey Department of Education estimates of the preschool universe fall short in their ability to account for mobility, changes in birth rates, and other factors affecting the size of age cohorts in the districts.

7. Federal laws guiding the educational environment of people with disabilities include: the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (amended in 2004) 20 U.S.C. § 1400, et seq; Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act (1973) 29 U.S.C. § 794; and less directly, the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 42 U.S.C. § 2131, et seq. State regulation is New Jersey Administrative Code 6A:14, and state statute is New Jersey Statutes Annotated 18A:46.

8. Below, we report the 2003–04 educational environment of three- and four-year-olds in Camden and the other Abbott districts. The New Jersey Council on Developmental Disabilities report includes children ages three through five in 2002.

9. The Supports for Early Literacy (SELA) is used to examine classroom practices that support children’s early language and literacy skills. The Preschool Classroom Mathematics Inventory (PCMI) assesses the materials and teaching strategies used to support and enhance children’s math skills.

10. As with the Abbott preschool teacher education requirement, the certification standard applied immediately to teachers in district-run programs. Teachers in community provider programs have until September 2006, and Head Start teachers have four years from the date when their program contracted with the Abbott district.

11. In these analyses, preschool teacher salary includes wages only and does not include fringe benefits. Any tuition reimbursement paid to alternate route teachers is not included.

12. The Supports for Early Literacy (SELA) is used to examine classroom practices that support children’s early language and literacy skills. The Preschool Mathematics Inventory (PCMI) assesses the materials and teaching strategies used to support and enhance children’s math skills.

13. Revenues may not be evenly distributed across provider types. Some providers may receive less aid per preschooler than this district average.

New Jersey's Core Curriculum Content Standards define what all students should know and be able to do at each grade and by the time they graduate from high school. Abbott provides several means to help students in low-income, urban districts achieve these standards.

3

3

K-12 Education

FIGURE | 3.1

Camden Schools, Grade Structure, and Enrollment: 2003-04

School Name	Grade Range		Enrollment
Early Childhood Center	Pk	Pk	217
Powell	Pk	G3	232
Cramer	Pk	G4	644
Washington	Pk	G4	392
Wilson	Pk	G4	368
Dudley	Pk	G5	317
Forest Hill	Pk	G5	542
Mcgraw	Pk	G5	437
Molina	Pk	G5	806
Parkside	Pk	G5	372
Sharp	Pk	G5	489
Sumner	Pk	G5	538
Whittier	Pk	G5	288
Yorkship	Pk	G5	690
Davis	Pk	G6	954
Lanning Square	Pk	G6	597
Wiggins	Pk	G6	536
Bonsall	Pk	G8	756
Coopers Poynt	Pk	G8	707
Riletta Cream	Pk	G8	698
Catto	G1	G5	99
East Camden	G5	G8	698
Morgan Village	G5	G8	635
Veterans Memorial	G5	G8	563
Hatch	G6	G8	549
Pyne Poynt Family	G6	G8	550
South Camden Alternative	G6	G8	57
Brimm Medical Arts	G9	G12	256
Camden	G9	G12	1,395
Creative & Performing Arts	G9	G12	196
Woodrow Wilson	G9	G12	1,377

SOURCE | Fall Survey, 2003-04

These include:

- Funding at the same level as the wealthiest ("I and J") suburban districts in the state;
- Class size limits;
- Comprehensive, or "whole-school" reform;
- Programs and services to meet the needs of students and their families;
- Assessment in each content area to measure student improvement at the classroom, school, and district levels; and
- Ways to help "low-performing" schools improve.

These elements are very similar to the "elements of effective schooling" we discuss throughout this report. Education stakeholders had these ingredients in mind when they developed Abbott. Each component will be described in greater detail throughout this section.

In 2003–04, the Camden public schools enrolled about 17,000 students in 31 public schools (not including children enrolled in private preschool programs). Among schools serving Camden students in preschool through Grade 8, there were nine different grade configurations. Twenty schools had preschool classrooms; most of those schools

spanned to Grade 5. There were six middle schools and four high schools.

Opportunities for Students to Learn

Whole School Reform

When Abbott first began, every elementary school was required to select a Whole School Reform model.¹⁴ Whole School Reform is an all-around approach to improve student learning and achievement. All models are not alike, but many have characteristics in common. In general, Whole School Reform models: 1) give decision-making authority to school-based teams that are representative of the district and the neighborhood; 2) provide help and training to schools by external experts; and 3) specify supports for teachers, students, and parents, including what the district can do to lead school improvement efforts. The New Jersey Department of Education chose Success for All as the primary model for Abbott schools because they thought it had the best track record for urban school improvement. Abbott schools

were free to choose one of five other models: the Comer School Development Program, Accelerated Schools, Coalition for Essential Schools, Community for Learning, and Modern Red Schoolhouse.¹⁵ Schools could propose other models, including ones that they or their district had developed. These models had to be approved by the New Jersey Department of Education.

Over the years, state support and enforcement of the Whole School Reform requirement has varied. Recently, the state has outlined ways for high-performing schools to opt out of their Whole School Reform models. There is also a way for the New Jersey Department of Education to require that low-performing schools use alternate approaches.

In this section, we review how Camden responded to Abbott's Whole School Reform requirement, and what models it chose.... In Spring 2004, the following whole school reform models were being implemented in Camden: America's Choice (in four schools), High Schools That Work (3), Talent Development (3), and Success for All/Roots and

Wings (2). Dr. Brimm Medical Arts High School uses its own state-approved model, described below. Based on our interviews with school staff in 2003–04, we know that several schools switched to another model developed by the district. To date, this model has not been approved by the New Jersey Department of Education.

Of the six schools we visited in 2003–04, three used the district's model (Parkside, Riletta Cream, and Washington). All three schools had used Comer's School Development Program before the Superintendent decided that schools using Comer would switch to the district's model. School staff reported that Comer was probably discontinued because: 1) it lacked a focus on curriculum and technology; 2) its cost was relatively high; and 3) the Superintendent desired to increase model consistency across the district. The school staff we spoke with had liked Comer because it emphasized parent and community involvement in school improvement.

3

K-12 Education

America's Choice

The America's Choice model, appropriate for Kindergarten through Grade 12, has as its chief goal to help all students (except those with the most severe disabilities) reach a standard of achievement in English and mathematics by the time they graduate. The model uses early detection, intervention, and acceleration to spot and prevent failure. Elementary school students get 150 minutes of literacy and 60 minutes of math instruction each day. Secondary school teachers work in teams, and larger high schools are encouraged to create small learning communities (or "schools within schools"). America's Choice schools are required to have Leadership Management Teams to oversee school reform.

High Schools That Work

The High Schools That Work model aims to provide a more challenging high school experience for and increase achievement of students not planning to attend college. The main program elements are: blending traditional college preparatory and vocational studies; enrolling career-bound students in courses for college-bound students; dropping basic courses from the curriculum; 90-minute blocks for core academic courses; extra help after school and in the summer; and learning in work environments. The model requires schools to have an advisory council made up of students, parents, teachers, community members and business leaders to oversee implementation of the program.

Talent Development Program—Middle School

The Talent Development Program was created by a team of researchers and educators at Johns Hopkins University. The purpose of the model, designed for Grades 4 through 9, is to create high-performing schools by providing students with standards-based instructional programs in all academic subjects. Key features of the Talent Development Program are: 1) Student Team Literature, a cooperative learning approach to reading/language arts; 2) a research and standards-based math curriculum designed to help students to succeed in Grade 8 algebra; 3) a science curriculum linked to national standards; and 4) a U.S. History course built around a multicultural narrative series; and 5) programs to give those students who need it extra help in reading and mathematics. Teachers receive focused, ongoing professional Development in reading, language arts, math, science, and U.S. History. The model also encourages changes in organizational structures such as small learning communities, team teaching, and common planning periods.

Talent Development Program—High School

The high school program was developed by a team of developers at Johns Hopkins and Howard Universities. This version of the model aims to improve achievement and other outcomes (such as attendance and drop-out) of at-risk students in large, urban high schools. The model aims to create a personalized environment for students by dividing the school into smaller academies: a Ninth Grade Success Academy, and several career academies for Grades 10 through 12. Each academy is self-contained with its own faculty and management team, and its own section of the building with a separate entrance. The same core academic courses are offered at each academy to prepare all students for college or work. Coursework and internships reflect the academy theme. The Ninth Grade Success Academy is a transitional program for first year students that is further divided into interdisciplinary teams of four teachers from different content areas. The daily schedule is organized around four, ninety-minute class periods: the extended time allows in-depth instruction and project learning. Students below grade level receive extra math and English assistance; those working above grade level have access to advanced courses and courses at local community colleges. Schools using Talent Development Program can also conduct an alternative program, the Twilight School for students who have serious attendance or discipline problems, or who are coming to the school from prison or suspension from another school. Instruction is offered in small classes, and extensive services are provided by guidance and support staff.

3

K-12 Education

Success for All/Roots & Wings

Success for All/Roots & Wings created by Robert Slavin, Nancy Madden, and a team of developers at Johns Hopkins University, is designed to boost the basic skills achievement of all students while building problem solving skills, creativity, and critical thinking. The purpose of the model is to create well-structured curricular and instructional approaches for all core academic subjects, preschool to Grade 6, using research-based principles of instruction, assessment, classroom management, motivation, and professional development. Success for All schools have a full-time facilitator to help implement the program, a family support team to improve community and parent involvement, and a school-based advisory team that advises the principal on general direction and goals and evaluates school climate. Many of the elements of Success for All—such as intensive early literacy, tutoring for elementary grades students who are not reading on grade level, and family support teams—are required under Abbott, even in schools that do not adopt this model. The Roots & Wings version of the program adds to the original, reading-only model added instructional components in math, social studies, and science.

Staff from Pyne Poynt Middle School said they liked America's Choice because it had a great leadership model and an emphasis on language arts literacy; and offered ongoing training and mentoring. Pyne Poynt previously used the Community For Learning/Adaptive Learning Environments Model but switched in September 2001 because of the model's lack of focus on academic content.

Woodrow Wilson High School staff chose High Schools That Work because it provided teachers with in-class coaching and modeling. In its 2004–05 strategic plan, the district notes that it has signed contracts with the model developers of High Schools That Work and America's Choice and is committed to full implementation of these models.

The Dr. Brimm Medical Arts High School is a selective school with its own career magnet model that has been approved by the New Jersey Department of Education. The goal of the school is to prepare students with an interest in health-related careers to be accepted in a college and succeed in their chosen career. In addition to traditional core

subject areas and health-related electives, the curriculum features cross-content projects called Collaboratives. Collaboratives encourage students to explore common themes using skills and knowledge from multiple academic subject areas. Medical professionals make presentations and guest lecture at the school, and students visit nearby Our Lady of Lourdes and other medical facilities including veterinary hospitals and cancer treatment centers. Students also do service hours at Our Lady of Lourdes.

Program Structure

Elementary schools are in session for six hours and thirty minutes each day. The day begins with a 90-minute language arts literacy period. With respect to language arts, 800 minutes per week are allotted for students in Grades 1 through 6. There are 90-minute literacy blocks in Grades 1–3, as well as at the upper elementary and middle grades. With respect to math, 200 minutes per week are allotted for students in Grades 1 and 2; 260 minutes for Grade 3; 290 minutes

for Grades 4 through 6; and 252 minutes for middle school students. At the high school level, students are required to take 20 credits (four years) of English and 15 credits (three years) of math.

Class size research suggests that smaller class sizes can help teachers spend less time on behavior management and more time on instruction that is better attuned to students' needs. In fact, there is strong evidence that smaller class sizes help students in the early elementary grades to perform better in school. Evidence on the benefits of smaller class sizes for students in later grades is less clear. In recognition of the potential benefits to students of all ages, Abbott schools have class size standards as follows:

Kindergarten through grade 3: 21

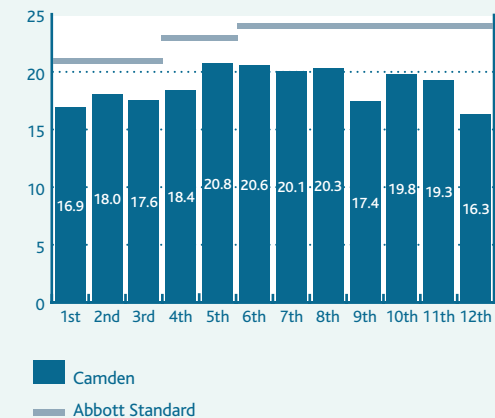
Grades 4 through 5: 23

Grades 6 through 12: 24

Figure 3.2 shows the average class size by grade for Camden compared to the Abbott standards. In the most recent year in which we have information, Camden's average class

FIGURE | 3.2

Average Class Size by Grade: Camden, 2002–03



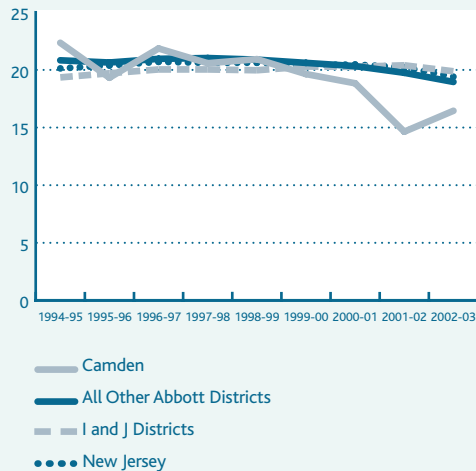
SOURCE | School Report Card, 2002–03

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FIGURE | 3.3

Elementary School Average Class Size by District Grouping, 1994–95 to 2002–03



SOURCE | School Report Card, 1994–95 to 2002–03

size was well below the Abbott standard in every grade.

Figure 3.3 shows how elementary school class sizes have changed over the years by district grouping. Elementary school class sizes across the state and in the wealthiest districts have stayed at about 20 students between 1994–95 and 2002–03. Meanwhile, elementary school class sizes in the Abbott districts (other than Camden) have decreased from 21 to just less than 19. In Camden, average class sizes were slightly larger than the other Abbott districts in 1994–95, but decreased by more than 25 percent to between 16 and 17 students per class in 2002–2003, smaller on average than class sizes in the other Abbott districts.

Why are class sizes going down in Camden’s elementary schools? Possible reasons include increased classroom space, more teachers, or lower enrollments. Figure 3.4 shows the district’s total elementary school enrollment from 1994–95 to 2002–03. We can see that K–8 enrollment has decreased about 14 percent: from 16,332 in 1994–95 to

just over 14,000 in 2002–03. Lower enrollment accounts for some of the drop in class size over this time period. These data suggest that the district has also increased classroom space, hired more elementary school teachers, or it has taken a combination of these actions.

High school class sizes in Camden have remained more constant than elementary school class sizes, as shown in Figure 3.5. Camden’s high school class sizes were below 15 for several years, before rising in 2001–02 and 2002–03. While still below the average for other Abbott districts, the average class size in Camden high schools was 17 in 2002–03—or about 39 percent larger than they were at their lowest point.

We turn to Figure 3.6 to see whether changes in enrollment might explain the slight growth in class size in Camden’s high schools. The figure shows that high school enrollment in Camden increased by about two percent between 1994–95 and 2002–03 from just over 3,000 students to about 3,125. Enrollment changes, then, do not explain

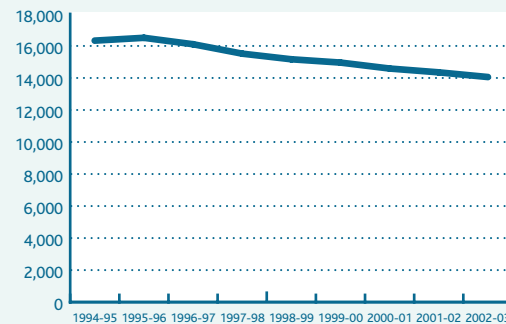
the growth in class sizes. Something else has been at work in Camden's high schools: either there has been a small reduction in the teaching work force or difficulties managing classroom space.

Programs for Students with Disabilities

Federal and state laws guide the education of individuals with disabilities.¹⁶ The law requires that children with disabilities be educated in the "least restrictive environment." This means that, to the maximum extent possible, students are educated in the school they would have attended if they did not have a disability, and participate in academic, nonacademic, and extracurricular activities with students who do not have disabilities. The general education classroom is the preferred placement for children with disabilities; however, school districts must also offer a range of alternative services for students who cannot be educated in the general education classroom for part or all of the day. The law also states that children with disabilities should only be placed in sepa-

FIGURE | 3.4

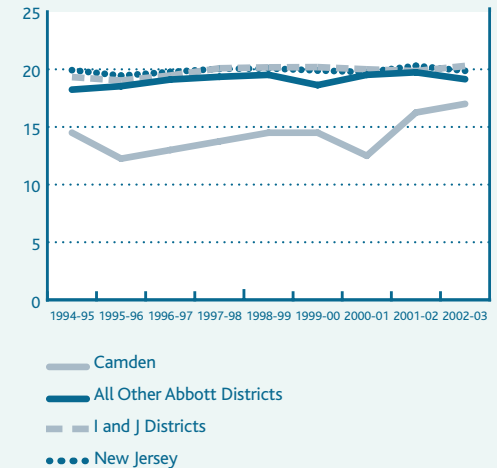
Elementary School Enrollment: Camden, 1994–95 to 2002–03



SOURCE | School Report Card, 1994-95 to 2002-03

FIGURE | 3.5

High School Average Class Size by District Grouping, 1994–95 to 2002–03



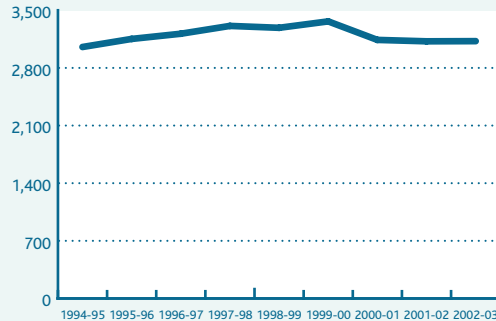
SOURCE | School Report Card, 1994-95 to 2002-03

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FIGURE | 3.6

High School Enrollment: Camden, 1994–95 to 2002–03



SOURCE | School Report Card, 1994–95 to 2002–03

rate classes or schools, or removed from the general education classroom when the nature or severity of the disability prevents them from being educated in the general education classroom, even with the use of supplemental aids and services.

The law requires schools and districts to provide children with appropriate educational experiences and quality services that are tailored to their individual needs. For as much time as possible, this education must be provided in inclusive, rather than separate settings. Below, we discuss the settings where Camden’s special needs students are educated.

About 25 percent of Camden’s nearly 3,000 students with disabilities go to school in a “very inclusionary” setting (spending 80% or more of their day with the general education population) compared to 28 percent in the other Abbott districts, 42 percent in the state overall, and 56 percent in the wealthiest districts (Figure 3.7).

Almost two in five (39%) students with disabilities in Camden are in self-contained classrooms for a major portion of the day (spending less than 40 percent of the day in general education classrooms)—a much greater percentage than in the state as a whole (17%) and the wealthiest districts (8%). Compared to the other Abbott districts, a smaller percentage of Camden special education students attend separate schools.

Curriculum

In 1996, New Jersey was among the first states to adopt curriculum standards, called the Core Curriculum Content Standards (CCCS). The CCCS describe what students should know and be able to do in nine content areas at each grade level from Kindergarten to Grade 12 and upon high school graduation. The content areas are: career education and consumer, family, and life skills; comprehensive health and physical education; language arts literacy; mathematics; science; social studies; technology; visual and performing arts; and world languages. The CCCS define a

“thorough and efficient education,” to which all New Jersey residents are entitled under the State Constitution.

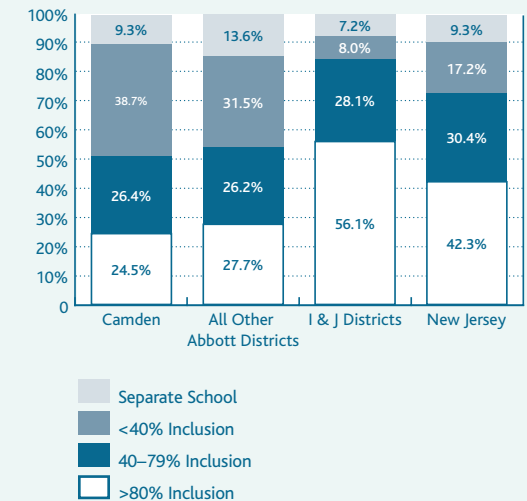
To date, the Camden Board of Education primarily has used purchased curricula supplemented with curricula developed in the district. Content-specific curriculum committees, made up of teachers, administrators, central office staff, external consultants, and representatives from curriculum vendors, assess the needs of students and make decisions about curriculum development, adoption, and review. District staff told us that the committees review curricula regularly to make sure that they are aligned with the CCCS and the requirements of Abbott and No Child Left Behind. They also want to ensure that curricula provide a cultural perspective. Curriculum committees analyze student test results to determine what knowledge students need to have. The district is reconfiguring its curriculum development teams within content area and across grades to review the scope and sequence of curricula and ensure linkage to the Core Curriculum Content Standards.

As of September 2004, the district’s strategic plan notes that the Camden Board of Education developed and received board approval on a districtwide curriculum in Mathematics for Grades 6 through 9; and districtwide curricula in English, Science, and Social Studies for Grade 9. Beginning in the 2004–05 school year, master schedules also have been changed to accommodate 120-minute blocks for language arts literacy and math for students in Grades 1 through 8.

College preparatory classes. Nationwide, high school students of color are under-represented in college admissions. One reason might be a lack of opportunity to learn challenging material in high school. Camden’s high schools offer courses to prepare students for the challenge of college and make them more competitive in the college application process. Camden’s seniors have the opportunity to take Advanced Placement (AP) courses in Biology, Calculus, Chemistry, and English Literature and Composition. College preparatory and honors courses are offered in Biology, Chemistry, and Physics. We com-

FIGURE | 3.7

Educational Environment of Students with Disabilities Ages 6–21 by District Grouping, 2003–04



*Home and residential placements are one percent or less.

SOURCE | New Jersey Department of Education: Office of Special Education Programs, 2003–04

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Nationwide, students of color are under-represented in college admissions.

pared Camden's advanced placement course offerings to those in Cherry Hill, a nearby "I" district. Camden offers four courses compared to Cherry Hill's 17. The district reports that its high schools are now implementing a five-year plan to add advanced placement courses, increase enrollment in existing courses, and improve student performance on advanced placement tests.

In addition to advanced placement courses, students at Dr. Brimm Medical Arts High School can take elective courses such as Introduction to Research and Biochemistry Research, Marine Science, Environmental Science, Human Genetics, Mammalian Anatomy/Physiology, and Introduction to Microbiology. Woodrow Wilson High School students can receive dual credit from Camden County College in Calculus, U.S. History, and Spanish.

Student and Family Supports

Abbott Overview

Under Abbott, the New Jersey Supreme Court requires the State to fund and implement "supplemental programs" in the Abbott districts. The purpose of these programs is to address the disadvantages experienced by young people who grow up in poor cities. There are two kinds of "supplemental" programs under Abbott. Some programs are required. Required programs include:

- Full-day Kindergarten;
- Intensive early literacy;
- Parent involvement;
- Class size limits;
- Health and social service referral;
- Access to technology;
- Alternative education and dropout prevention;
- Early math instruction;
- Professional development;
- Violence prevention and school security; and
- School-to-work and college transition; and

Funding to support others is available if a school or district can show that the students

need them. Programs that are available, if needed, are:

- On-site social and health services;
- Literacy supports for schools not using Success for All;
- After-school instructional programs;
- Summer instructional programs;
- Nutrition programs;
- Exemplary music, art, and special education; and
- School-based management and budgeting.

We were able to gather information on supplemental programs and services by visiting schools and by reviewing budgets and other documents. We did not catalog all of the supplemental programs in Camden or the other Abbott districts, nor did we assess their quality. Although there is a real need to know if students are receiving needed services, such extensive study was beyond the scope of our project. In this section we discuss the type of supplemental programs available to the young people attending Camden's public schools. If a program is not listed below, it does not mean that it is not available: only

that we did not gather information about it to include in this report.

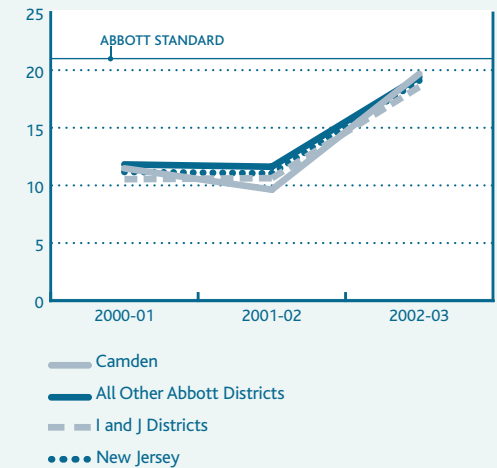
Full-Day Kindergarten

Children who attend full-day Kindergarten learn more reading and math than those in half-day classes. Children in small Kindergarten classes learn more than those in medium-sized or large classes. The research shows that children from low-income families learn more in smaller classes that are led by a teacher and supported by an instructional aide. All students enrolled in Kindergarten in an Abbott district are entitled to a full day of school in a class that is no larger than 21 children and taught by a teacher and an instructional aide.

All of Camden's Kindergarten classes have been full day at least as early as 1998–99, as have the majority throughout the state. The findings below show the average size of its Kindergarten classes from 2000–01 to 2002–03 compared to all other Abbotts, the wealthiest districts, and the state average. The findings reveal—for every district grouping

FIGURE | 3.8

Kindergarten Average Class Size by District Grouping, 2000–01 to 2002–03



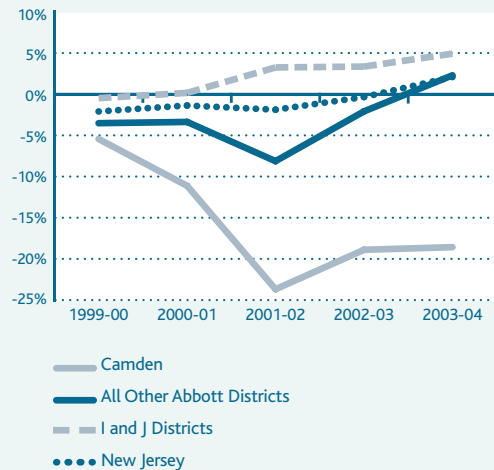
SOURCE | School Report Card, 1994-95 to 2002-03

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FIGURE | 3.9

Cumulative Percent Change in Kindergarten Enrollment
by District Grouping, 1999–00 to 2003–04



SOURCE | School Report Card, 1994-95 to 2002-03; Fall Survey 2003-04

we analyzed—Kindergarten class sizes were smaller than the Abbott standard of 21 and rose to close to the maximum class size by 2002–03. Camden’s Kindergarten class size was 11.5 in 2000–01 and 19.7 in 2002–03. The average Kindergarten class size in all other Abbott districts was 11.8 in 2000–01 and 19.4 in 2002–03.

Several possible factors might affect Kindergarten class sizes: limited classroom space, a growing Kindergarten enrollment, and/or teacher staff lines have been reduced or have not kept up with enrollment. Figure 3.9 shows the cumulative percent changes in Kindergarten enrollment for Camden, all other Abbott districts, and the state from 1998–99 to 2003–04. We use cumulative percent change because it allows us to compare district groupings of unequal sizes and illustrates the actual enrollment trend over time including all of the ups and downs in between. Reading left to right, the first point shows the percent change between 1998–99 and 1999–00, the second shows that change plus

the change between 1999–00 and 2000–01, and so on.

Camden Kindergarten enrollments dropped almost 25 percent from 1998–99 to 2001–02. Kindergarten enrollment recovered a little in 2002–03 and continued growing in 2003–04. The findings suggest that enrollment growth may have contributed to larger class sizes in 2002–03. Because enrollments are still lower than they were in the late 1990s, staff size or classroom space also probably played a role.

Early Literacy

Under Abbott, schools are required to provide 90-minute blocks of reading instruction to children in Kindergarten through Grade 3. Students in Grades 1 through 3 who are not reading at grade level must receive one-on-one tutoring; older elementary grade students not reading at grade level must receive small-group tutoring.

We reviewed early literacy programs in the three schools we visited in 2003–04 that serve students in the early elementary grades.

Washington School offered daily, one-on-one tutoring to students in Grades 1 through 3 who participated in the after-school program (for high academic need students); and small-group tutoring to students in Grades 4 and 5 in the after-school program. Parkside only provided small-group tutoring to about half of the students in Grades 3 and 4 reading below grade level, but it was not on a daily basis. Only Riletta Cream Elementary School said that they provided daily tutoring to any student who needed it. Kindergarten and Grade 1 students were tutored by volunteers from the BookMates program.¹⁷ Daily small-group tutoring was offered to Grade 4 and 5 students. Each grade level also had a teacher's aide or instructional assistant to work with students needing help with reading.

Parent Involvement

Emerging research suggests that children with parents who are engaged in their *learning* are more likely to earn higher grades and test scores, improve their social skills, graduate from high school, and go on to college. Parent

involvement in the *school* can be important too if it is linked to improving learning, developing specific skills, or encouraging children to take more challenging classes. Parent involvement can also build a sense of community accountability for student learning.

Under the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, districts are required to use a portion of their federal funding to form and support a district parent advisory council. As required, Camden has a district parent advisory council. A community member who reviewed this report noted that the district's support for and cooperation with the group has varied over the years, however.

Abbott schools are required to make efforts to involve parents and caregivers in their children's education and in general school decision-making. At the very least, each school should have a parent-community coordinator (or family liaison) and parent representation on its SLC.

Five of the six schools we visited had parent-community coordinators (called community school coordinators in Camden)

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who served as liaisons between the school and children's homes to bring more parents into the school building and to change the belief that parents are not welcome in the school. The parent-community coordinator provides workshops for parents addressing student academic and health issues, and works with families to address individual student needs. Woodrow Wilson High School did not have a parent-community coordinator in 2003–04. SLC chairs at all of the schools we visited told us that there are parent representatives on their management teams.

Health and Social Services

Referral and coordination. Under Abbott, schools should have staff that connect parents, caregivers, and children with needed health and social services. The goals of this staff are: 1) to ensure that the children are able to come to school every day prepared to learn and succeed; and 2) to reduce time taken out by teachers to address students' nonacademic problems. Aside from connecting families to neighborhood services, staff

should provide counseling and educational services. At the very least, elementary schools are required to have a "Family Support Team," made up of a nurse, social worker, counselor, parent-community coordinator, and the Whole School Reform instructional facilitator. At middle and high schools, the parent-community coordinator and health and social service coordinator do the job of the Family Support Team.

Of the six schools we visited, four (Parkside, Pyne Poynt, Riletta Cream, and Washington) had specific teams that were responsible for identifying health and social service needs. These teams were made up of the principal, school nurse, guidance counselor, social worker, paraprofessionals, and parent-community coordinator. Team members such as the school nurse conducted medical screenings and provided students and their families with health-related information. They also worked with community agencies and made referrals for students to receive services such as therapy and crisis management. For example, Pyne Poynt Middle School

family support staff meet with staff from local health agencies such as Cooper Hospital, CamCare, and Virtua Crisis Care to discuss individual student needs and referrals. At Riletta Cream Elementary, the Pupil Assistance Committee (PAC) made up of the school nurse, a child study team member, guidance counselor, and speech therapist, meets to discuss students identified by teachers as having academic or behavioral problems, and outline strategies that could be implemented before referring the student to the Child Study Team. The school nurse, guidance counselor, a child study team member, and speech therapist participate on the PAC.

Dr. Brimm Medical Arts High School did not have a health and social service coordinator or parent-community coordinator. Instead, staff told us that the school nurse conducts all of the student screenings and monitors individual health and social service needs. Staff from Woodrow Wilson's School-Based Youth Services Program (see description below) serve in the capacity of the Family Support Team at this school.

On-site services. Under Abbott, if social and health services are not easy to access outside of school, schools may request funding to support an on-site clinic. In Camden, on-site services in the middle and high schools are funded from another source. Through a special arrangement with and support from the New Jersey Department of Human Services, all of Camden's middle and high schools offer health and counseling services on-site through the School-Based Youth Services Program.¹⁸

Camden's schools provide a number of other programs to promote student social and emotional well-being. Woodrow Wilson High School offers New Jersey Teen Prevention Education Program (Teen PEP), a program in which juniors and seniors take a course for credit using a structured curriculum. Advisor teams train students to become peer educators who conduct workshops with peers, parents, and educators focusing on issues such as teen pregnancy, sexually transmitted diseases, dating violence, and postponing sexual involvement.

The purpose of Abbott supplemental programs is to address the disadvantages experienced by young people who grow up in poor cities.

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Woodrow Wilson High School students also participate in REBEL (Reaching Everyone by Exposing Lies), a tobacco prevention program sponsored by the New Jersey Department of Health and Senior Services.¹⁹ Dr. Brimm Medical Arts High School offers DARE (Drug Abuse and Resistance Education) and SADD (Students Against Drunk Driving) programs. The school's medical curriculum also includes topics related to health, substance abuse prevention, and violence prevention.

The district has a program at Jerrothia Riggs Adult Education Center where pregnant teens can continue their education. They are given work from their sending schools enabling them to be current with their classes when they return to their regular schools after delivery.

Access to Technology

Abbott districts are required to have at least one media specialist and one technology coordinator who make sure that students master the technology needed to reach the State's Core Curriculum Content Standards, class-

rooms and libraries have adequate equipment and technology is effectively used to support teaching and learning. There should be no more than five students to each computer in each school throughout the district.

Below, we show the number of students to every computer in Camden, the other Abbott districts, the wealthiest districts in the state, and statewide. We have information about the student-computer ratio after the influx of funding (1997–98) for the other Abbott districts. In Camden, this information is only available from 1999–00 onward. Figure 3.10 shows that Camden students had easier access to computers than their peers in the other Abbott districts or throughout the state in 1999–00, and that access to computers continued to improve. By 2002–03, Camden students had the same access to computers as did children in the wealthiest suburbs.

Student access to computers improved dramatically in the other Abbott districts too. The average number of students to every computer decreased steadily from 11.3 to 4.8 in the other Abbott districts, better (lower) than

the recommended standard of five students to every one computer. Access to computers also improved throughout the state and in the wealthiest districts. Several community members who reviewed this report noted that this information does not tell us how well the use of technology is integrated into student instruction.

When we visited Camden in 2003–04, school staff told us about several technology-based programs in the district. Through the districtwide Lightspan initiative, students can take home Sony Playstations for use with standards-based CD-ROM software to supplement the instruction they receive in class. Five of the six schools we visited used Compass Learning, a program that reinforces skills in reading, math, and social studies. Woodrow Wilson High School uses Achieva²⁰ software and the Sylvan Learning Labs to provide students with additional opportunities to master the curriculum.

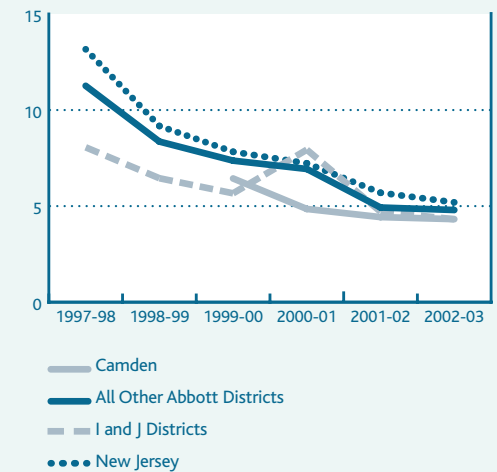
Alternative Education

Abbott districts are also required to identify and provide services to students at risk of failing and dropping out. At a minimum, the districts are required to provide alternative programs for young people in middle and high school, and be adequately staffed with dropout prevention specialists.

The Camden Board of Education runs five alternative education programs for students in Grades 6 through 12 who need an alternative learning environment because of academic or behavioral problems: South Camden Alternative School, Camden Alternative Motivational Program (CAMP), Project: AFFIRM, Camden City Academic Laboratory Program (CCALP), and Port of Re-Entry. Special education students may take part if the programs meet their individual needs as specified in their Individualized Education Plans (IEP). According to district policy, all programs are small learning communities with no more than 15 students to any teacher and a maximum total enrollment of 60 students. Each program has its own entry and exit criteria.

FIGURE | 3.10

Student–Computer Ratio by District Grouping, 1997–98 to 2002–03



SOURCE | School Report Card, 1997–98 to 2002–03

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Each student in a Camden alternative program has an individual program plan. Students may graduate from any of the high school-level programs and receive a traditional academic diploma if they maintain an adequate attendance record, pass one of the two statewide, standardized high school proficiency tests, and demonstrate mastery of the state's Core Curriculum Content Standards.

South Camden Alternative School is an alternative middle school serving special education students, students with behavioral problems, and students with poor attendance records. The mission of the program is to act as an extension of the family and assist parents in their child's development. The program seeks to improve each child's social, emotional, and academic development through positive reinforcement and structured guidance. In addition to academics, South Camden's program features community service and mentor support groups for students.

Camden Alternative Motivational Program (CAMP) is a one-year alternative pro-

gram at Camden High School serving ninth graders who earned fewer than 15 credits the previous school year and failed two or more courses. If space is available, CAMP also accepts over-age eighth graders. The program, which runs every day from 7:30 A.M. to 1:00 P.M. offers core curriculum subjects, life skills, and computer applications courses. CAMP students are required to participate in the "School to Career" initiative which gives them the opportunity to receive paid employment, internships, community service, or vocational/technical education for extra credits towards graduation. At the end of the school year, CAMP students meet with a counselor to discuss their appropriate placement for the following school year. Staff plan to expand the program in 2004-05 from a one-year to a two-year program.

Project: AFFIRM, located on the campus of Camden County College, enriches students' academic experience with mentoring support groups, parent involvement, community service/work experience, and peer mediation. Project AFFIRM mainly enrolls students

in Grades 10 through 12, although younger students may be admitted if they meet entry criteria. Students must be referred by their school and, with a parent or guardian, undergo an interview with the admissions officer.

Camden City Academic Laboratory Program (CCALP), located at the Boys and Girls Club, serves students ages 15 to 17 in Grades 9 through 11 who are performing up to two years below grade level. CCALP employs behavioral intervention teams who work with parents to support their children's academic achievement and positive behavior. The program emphasizes high expectations, parent involvement, and community service.

Port of Re-Entry at the Jerrothia Riggs Adult Education Center is an alternative high school for students in Grades 9 through 12 who are transitioning from juvenile detention. The program opened in 2003–04 as a partnership between the Camden Board of Education and the Office of Juvenile Parole and Transitional Services. In addition to academics, Port of Re-Entry provides wraparound services such as anger manage-

ment, crisis counseling, and school-to-work training. The program philosophy encourages teachers to be responsive to multiple learning styles, and encourages the development of the whole student.

College and Work Transition Programs

High schools in Abbott districts are also required to provide programs to help students transition to their chosen pathways after graduation. These programs should help students: 1) explore their interests and strengths; 2) improve their skills and prepare for responsible self-reliance in adulthood; and 3) prepare for college admissions and/or employment applications.

According to the district, all students have the opportunity to take part in a program where they can explore colleges, take college tours, prepare for college entrance exams and receive guidance through the financial aid and college application process. Students who are not interested in college can also explore employment options and training.

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Abbott high schools are also required to provide programs to help students transition to their chosen pathways after graduation.

The Dr. Brimm Medical Arts High School is a selective career magnet school. The goal of the school is to prepare students with an interest in health-related careers to be accepted in a college and succeed in the career of their choice. In addition to academics, students are exposed to the medical professions through guest lectures, visits to nearby Our Lady of Lourdes and other medical facilities including veterinary hospitals and cancer treatment centers. Students do service hours at Our Lady of Lourdes.

Woodrow Wilson High School's Whole School Reform model, High Schools That Work, also has college transition and work preparation components. Woodrow Wilson offers students the opportunity to take college-level courses at Camden County College and take part in GEAR UP and a college transition program with Rowan University.²¹ In 2003–04, a mentor program was also piloted at the school. Teachers provided seniors with information about the college admissions process and talked with them about teaching as a career choice. School staff said that they

planned to expand the program down to other grades in 2004–05.

After-School Programs

Thirteen schools in the district offered its students after-school programs in 2003–04: Bonsall, Cooper's Poynt, Cramer, Riletta Cream, Lanning Square, Molina, Sharp, Sumner, Washington, Wiggins, and Yorkship Elementary Schools; and Pyne Poynt and Veterans' Middle Schools. The extended day program provides academic support for students scoring at or below the 25th percentile on standardized tests.

Of the six schools we visited, five offered after-school programs. Some programs focused on academics while others were recreational. Washington Elementary School has a two-hour instructional program that runs until the second week in May. Parkside Elementary and Dr. Brimm Medical Arts High School had tutors (teachers and peers) to help struggling students. Sylvan Learning Systems runs its own learning lab every day before and after school at Pyne Poynt

Middle School. Riletta Cream students attend an after-school program off-site at a local church. The program provides 30 to 40 students with academic and social enrichment activities. The church also has a summer program. Woodrow Wilson High School does not offer an academic after school program but does have sports activities. Students can participate in Boost, a program sponsored by the University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey for students interested in science and medicine.

Summer Programs

The district's summer program provides enrichment classes in language arts literacy, math, social studies, science, and technology. There are program centers located throughout the city; students are bused to selected centers in their area that have air-conditioning. The district does not offer any summer recreational programs but students do have the opportunity to participate in a six-week science program at the Camden Aquarium in the afternoon. At the high school level, the program

location alternates between Woodrow Wilson and Camden High Schools each year.

During the month of July, Washington Elementary School offers a program for students performing below grade level to develop their reading and writing skills. Teachers at Pyne Poynt Middle School and Parkside and Riletta Cream Elementary Schools provide students with course work packets to keep them involved in learning activities over the summer. In the fall, teachers check the packets for accuracy and students receive credit. Students also get these packets over the winter break. Several schools in the district also participate in the 100-Book Challenge which encourages students to read during the summer.

Art and Music

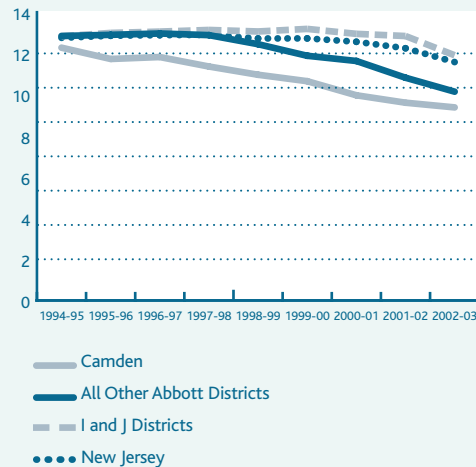
Supplemental funding is available for schools that show the need for exemplary art and music programs. Below, we briefly review the art and music programs at the schools we visited, who taught them, and where they were held. Ideally, instruction should take place in rooms that are dedicated to these subjects and

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FIGURE | 3.11

Student-Teacher Ratio by District Groupings, 1994–95 to 2002–03



SOURCE | School Report Card, 1994-95 to 2002-03

taught by specialists in the subject matter. All six schools we visited had music and art programs. Pyne Poynt, Dr. Brimm Medical Arts High School, and Woodrow Wilson High School had dedicated music and art facilities. Students at Parkside and Washington Elementary Schools received music and art instruction from specialized teachers who traveled from classroom to classroom. Riletta Cream Elementary had a music room that was used by students in the younger grades. The music teacher for the upper grades and the school's two art teachers traveled between classrooms.

K-12 Teacher Qualifications and Supports

There are no wholly adequate ways to assess teaching quality without observing instruction and talking to teachers, parents, and children. These methods are beyond the scope of our project, so we offer information about the number and qualifications of teachers, the training available to them, and information about how their colleagues and the district help them to do the best job they can do.

Student-Teacher Ratio

Student-teacher ratios are different from class size. With class size we can see how many children are in the classroom on average, while student-teacher ratios show the relationship between the total number of certificated faculty on staff and total enrollment. Student-teacher ratios may be smaller than class sizes if classes are team-taught, or if specialized faculty are present in the classrooms—such as reading specialists, or bilingual or special education aides.

Figure 3.11 shows that the student-teacher ratio improved in Camden and the other Abbott districts. In every year since 1994–95, there were fewer students to every teacher in Camden than in the wealthiest districts, or the state as a whole.

Faculty Attendance

Teachers who like their jobs, are involved in decision-making at school, and believe that their schools support their efforts are absent from the job less often. The quality of a school's environment plays a big part

in explaining teacher stress, and therefore teacher attendance. Teachers say that student misbehavior and even the change involved in school reform contribute to stress and burn-out. Of course, personal circumstances, such as health and family responsibilities, also account for some teacher absence. Next we examine the teacher attendance rates in Camden, compared to other Abbott districts, the wealthiest districts, and the state as a whole.

Figure 3.12 shows a positive statewide trend in faculty attendance between 1994–95 and 2002–03. Faculty attendance improved at about the same pace throughout the state and in the other Abbott districts. In Camden, faculty attendance trends show a different pattern. In 1994–95, attendance already was very good in Camden (91%) and stayed at about the same rate until 1999–00 when it began a steady improvement to 95 percent in 2002–03. In 2002–03, faculty attendance was between 95 and 97 percent in all of the district groupings we examined.

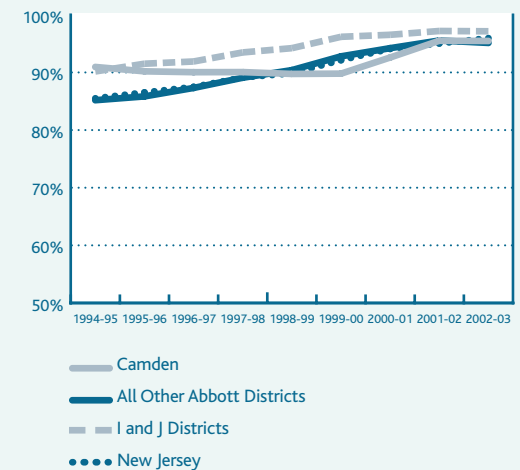
Highly Qualified Teachers

The Federal No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) outlines several measures that schools and districts must take to ensure a quality public education to all of their students. One provision requires that certain teachers must be “highly qualified” in each subject they teach.²² The requirements of becoming highly qualified under federal law vary depending on when the teacher is hired and what type of school he or she teaches in. In general, a teacher must hold a four-year college degree, be fully certified, and show a level of knowledge in his or her subject matter by passing a state test. New middle and high school teachers must also have a certain amount of college credits in the subject matter they teach. The law applies equally to teachers who teach many core subjects (such as many elementary school and special education teachers), those who specialize in a single subject (such as many middle and high school teachers), basic skills teachers, and bilingual and ESL teachers.

Figures 3.13 and 3.14 show the percentage of highly qualified teachers in Camden, other

FIGURE | 3.12

Faculty Attendance by District Grouping, 1994–95 to 2002–03



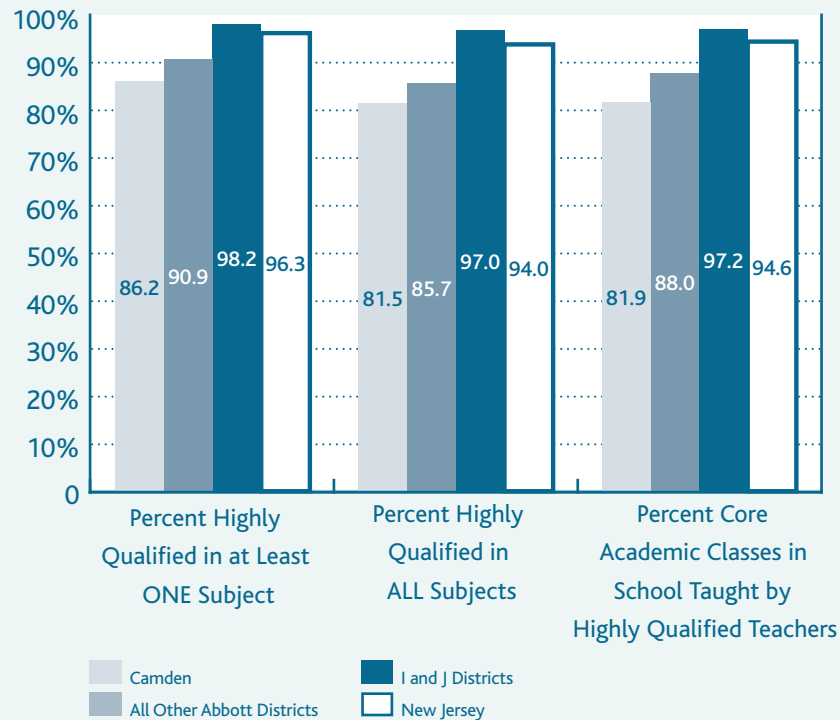
SOURCE | School Report Card, 1994-95 to 2002-03

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FIGURE | 3.13

Highly Qualified Teachers by District Grouping: Elementary Schools, 2003–04



SOURCE | Highly Qualified Teacher Survey, 2004

Abbott districts, the wealthiest districts, and the state average for elementary and secondary schools respectively. Reading left to right, the three sets of grouped bars show the percent who are highly qualified in at least *one* subject, the percent who are highly qualified in *all* core subjects, and the percent of core subject area *classes* taught by a highly qualified teacher. All districts must submit a “highly qualified teacher” report. Many districts, including Camden, had difficulty compiling the information needed to fulfill this reporting requirement. The Camden report review team discussed these problems and confirmed that the following information was what the district had submitted. They concluded that local stakeholders should view this information—despite potential reporting problems—because of the importance of this indicator as a proxy for teaching quality.

Figure 3.13 shows that a large majority of the teachers in all district groupings were highly qualified. At the elementary school level, Camden had the lowest percentage of highly qualified teachers among the district

groupings examined and the lowest percentage of core classes taught by highly qualified teachers. Even so, more than four out of five of Camden's elementary teachers were highly qualified in at least *one* subject and highly qualified in *all* of the core academic subjects they taught, and four out of five core *classes* were taught by a highly qualified teacher.

Figure 3.14 shows the information about highly qualified teachers in Camden's high schools. A large majority of New Jersey's high school teachers are highly qualified, and Camden's high school teaching staff compared well with the other district groupings. Eighty-seven percent were highly qualified in at least *one* subject they taught and 87 percent were highly qualified in *all* of the subjects they taught. We see a real gap between Camden and the other district groupings in the percent of classes taught by highly qualified teachers, however. Slightly more than half (54%) of Camden's core high school *classes* are taught by highly qualified teachers, compared to about 90 percent in the other Abbott districts and even more in the other district group-

ings. There are two reasons why we might see a difference between the percent of highly qualified *teachers* on the one hand and the percent of *classes* taught by them on the other. The percent of classes may be lower if highly qualified teachers have lighter course loads. Also, teachers may be asked to teach subjects other than the ones they are highly qualified for. These findings suggest that Camden's highly qualified high school teachers either teach fewer classes or are being assigned to teach other subjects.

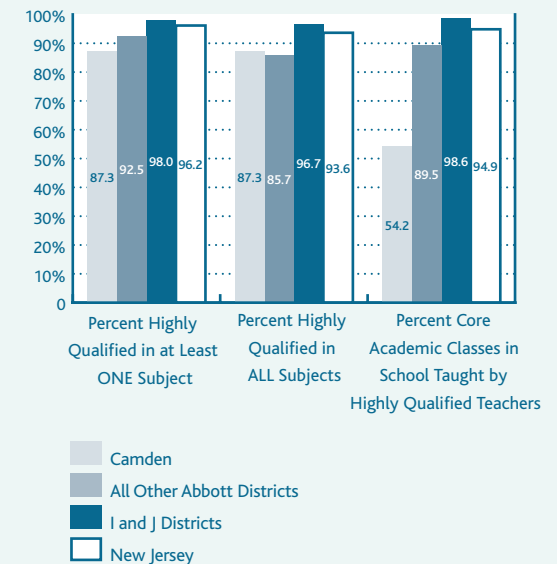
Staffing Patterns

Abbott districts electronically submit their school staffing plans to the New Jersey Department of Education each year. We present the districts' submissions as estimates of the true number of staff that are employed and note that they do not reflect new hires or layoffs that may have occurred after these data were reported.

Several staffing positions are needed to put the Abbott reforms into action. Some positions are required in all schools, others are

FIGURE | 3.14

Highly Qualified Teachers by District Grouping:
High Schools, 2003–04



SOURCE | Highly Qualified Teacher Survey, 2004

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FIGURE | 3.15

Percent of Schools with Required Abbott Staff Positions: Camden and All Other Abbott Districts, 2002-03 to 2003-04

Elementary Schools Staff	Camden		All Other Abbott Districts	
	2002-03	2003-04	2002-03	2003-04
Instructional Facilitator	87.0%	66.7%	98.0%	97.4%
Social Worker	39.1%	70.8%	72.0%	68.6%
Teacher Tutor	0.0%	0.0%	26.4%	43.5%
All Positions	0.0%	0.0%	21.8%	36.3%
Middle and High Schools Staff	Camden		All Other Abbott Districts	
	2002-03	2003-04	2002-03	2003-04
Attendance/Dropout Prevention Officer	61.5%	60.0%	48.6%	51.2%
Health-Social Service Coordinator	0.0%	84.6%	36.7%	34.3%
All Positions	0.0%	53.8%	26.2%	29.5%
All Schools Staff	Camden		All Other Abbott Districts	
	2002-03	2003-04	2002-03	2003-04
Family Liaison (Parent-Community Coordinator)	0.0%	40.6%	73.9%	73.4%
Guidance Counselor	84.4%	84.4%	94.6%	94.3%
Librarian/Media Specialist	90.6%	87.5%	89.4%	91.4%
Nurse/Health Specialist	93.8%	87.5%	97.5%	97.8%
Security Officer	93.8%	93.7%	87.7%	88.7%
Technology Coordinator	0.0%	87.5%	88.9%	86.2%
All Positions	0.0%	34.4%	61.8%	67.0%

SOURCE | DOENET Abbott School-Based Budget Staffing Tables, 2002-03 to 2003-04

specific to elementary or secondary schools. We compare Camden and the other Abbott districts on the percent of schools with each required position in 2002-03 and 2003-04 (Figure 3.15). Findings are shown separately for schools serving students in the elementary grades, students in Grades 6 through 12, and all schools.

Under Abbott, children in Grades 1 through 6 who are not reading at grade level are entitled to tutoring sessions. Each school should have teacher-tutors to provide one-on-one tutoring to students in Grades 1 through 3 and small-group tutoring to students in Grades 4 through 6. Abbott elementary schools should also have an instructional facilitator to coordinate Whole School Reform efforts and act as a mentor and information resource to his or her teacher-colleagues. Finally, each elementary school should have a social worker to work as an integral part of the Family Support Team coordinating supportive services for students.

None of Camden's 23 schools serving students in the elementary grades employed

all of the staff positions required under Abbott in either year (Figure 3.15). Most had an instructional facilitator in both years and most employed social workers as required in 2003–04 (in 2002–03, nine had social workers). During our visits, several schools reported offering some tutoring for children reading below grade level; however, Figure 3.15 shows that Camden elementary schools did not employ any teacher tutors in either year.

On average, the other Abbott districts were in better compliance with elementary school staffing requirements. In 2003–04, more than one in three elementary schools in the other Abbott districts had all of the required positions: almost all had instructional facilitators, a majority had social workers, and about two in five employed teacher tutors.

Abbott requires each school serving middle and high school-age students to have two staff positions: dropout prevention coordinator and health and social services coordinator. Dropout prevention coordinators work with staff, parents, and students to identify students at risk of dropping out and intervene by

referring students to needed services. Health and social service coordinators ensure that students get the services they need to come to school ready to learn, benefit from instruction, and succeed in school.

In 2002–03, none of Camden’s 13 schools serving students in Grades 6 through 12 employed both of the required staff positions. Seven schools (54%) employed both in 2003–04. Eight schools (62%) had dropout prevention officers in both years and 11 schools (85%) had health and social service coordinators in 2003–04. In the other Abbott districts, about half of the middle and high schools had dropout prevention coordinators and a third had health and social service coordinators in both years.

Figure 3.15 lists the positions that *every* Abbott school should have and compares Camden’s compliance with the other Abbott districts on average. In 2003–04, only 13 of Camden’s schools (41%) had a family liaison as required. In contrast, a large majority of schools in the other Abbott districts employed staff in this critical position. The table sug-

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gests that the district hired several technology coordinators in 2003–04. Although none of the schools had one in 2002–03, 88 percent did in the following year. A majority of Abbott schools—in Camden and the other Abbott districts—had at least one guidance counselor, media specialist, nurse, and security officer in both years. With regard to the full set of Abbott staffing requirements, none of the Camden schools were in compliance in 2002–03 but 34 percent were in full compliance in 2003–04. A majority of the schools in the other Abbott districts were in compliance in both years.

Professional Development

For teachers. Regardless of experience, teachers can benefit from opportunities to update their knowledge and sharpen their skills. Most importantly, instructional practice tends to improve when teachers are provided with the supports they need to work effectively in the classroom. Below, we present the types of professional development offered to Camden’s K-12 teachers.

Three full days are allotted for district-wide professional development activities for Camden teachers. In 2003–04, a number of sessions were devoted to learning about and planning for new programs in the district. Teachers also attended workshops given by textbook vendors such as Harcourt and Voyager; and received in-services on standardized testing and test-taking skills.

With Board approval, schools also conduct their own professional development activities. At weekly planning meetings, teachers review student performance and develop plans to address areas needing improvement; principals attend these meetings to identify staff development needs. District and school supervisors visit classrooms, conduct observations, and model instructional practices for newer teachers and those who need help. At Dr. Brimm Medical Arts High School, new teachers are paired with mentors and have “buddies” who work with them in their homerooms. Teachers also attend conferences and workshops sponsored by Whole School Reform models. Staff also do “turn-

key” training: teachers who attend outside workshops provide training to other teachers when they return.

For principals. The Camden Board of Education partnered with the Princeton Center for Leadership Training, the Leadership Transformation Group of New York City, and Rutgers University—Camden Campus to design and implement a Leadership Academy for principals and teachers in the district. The Academy has two components: a Principals’ Leadership Academy and a Masters in Public Administration (MPA) program, with a specialty in education.

The Principals’ Leadership Academy provides new principals with a network of experienced principals to offer mentorship and guidance; new and veteran principals have the opportunity to work together with colleagues to become more effective at implementing change to improve schools. Principals have attended seminars on topics such as: group development, executive leadership and communication skills, managing organizational change, conducting in-service workshops,

and human resources management. Rutgers University—Camden Campus designed and implemented the MPA program to develop principals who will be able to fill positions as they become vacant in the district. The first class of 15 teachers began their coursework in Summer 2003. Camden principals also attend district workshops and outside conferences.

The district’s Office of Professional Development creates a professional development plan each year and coordinates activities for teachers and administrators. Ideas for professional development come from a number of sources including: student test score data, teacher observations and performance evaluations, and feedback from staff.

K-12 Budget

Overview

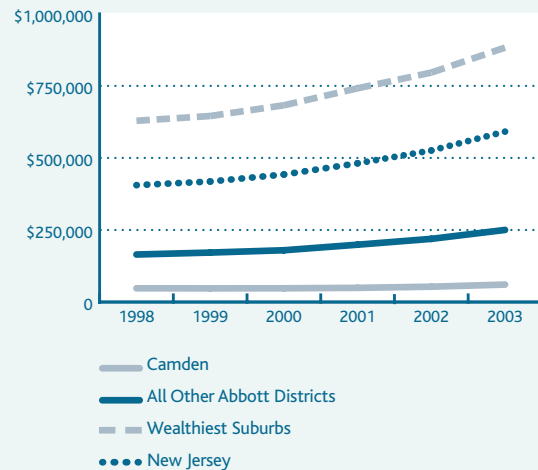
Up to this point, we have explored the characteristics of Camden and its children, and what schools and district offices do to provide children with a sound public education. Of course, schools and districts need money

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FIGURE | 3.16

Average Property Value Per Student by District Grouping, 1998–2003



SOURCE | New Jersey Department of Community Affairs: Office of Local Government Services, 1998–2003

to pay for most of the elements of effective schooling we have discussed. An adequate budget is, in itself, another essential element of effective schooling.

Unlike any other state in the nation, New Jersey ensures that the poorest urban school districts have enough money to provide children in preschool through Grade 12 with a sound public education. In this section, we describe the fiscal conditions in New Jersey's cities that resulted in a school funding gap between its urban and suburban districts. We then recount efforts led by New Jersey residents to help close that gap. Finally, we explore how these efforts have affected the money that is available to Camden and other school districts throughout the state to support public education.

Fiscal Distress

Camden, like several cities in the United States, entered into a state of fiscal distress in the mid-to late-20th Century. A pattern of urban decline was marked by a loss of private-sector employers and residents at the upper

end of the income scale. Job and resident losses continued in a downward spiral that resulted in decreasing property values and local tax revenues.

Neighborhoods in these cities began to experience the all-too-common symptoms of urban distress, including unemployment, high crime, and public health problems. Compared to those who left, the lower-income residents who remained placed a greater demand on public services such as public assistance, law enforcement, and subsidized or low-cost health care and housing. State and federal money that helped cities meet the increased demand for these services decreased over the same time period and did not make up for the lost local revenues.

Public education is, of course, an essential service provided by local governments and education costs are higher in school districts with high concentrations of low-income households. In New Jersey, public education is supported in large part by local taxes.²³ When property tax revenues decline, cities have less money to pay for education.

Figure 3.16 compares the property wealth in Camden, the other Abbott cities, the wealthiest suburbs in the state, and the state overall. Because local taxes are based on property values, property wealth is a good indicator of the availability of money to support education and other services provided by New Jersey's towns and cities.^{24, 25}

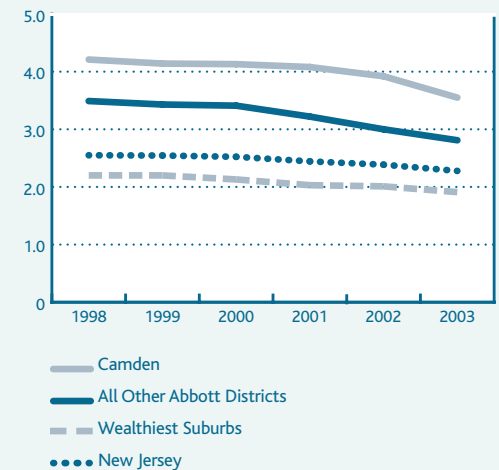
The most striking feature of Figure 3.16 is the enormous gap in property wealth between Camden and the other Abbott cities on the one hand and the wealthiest (I and J) suburbs on the other. In 1998, per student property values were 13 times higher in the wealthy suburbs (\$628,955) than in Camden (\$47,703). Property values rose across the board between 1998 and 2003, but less so in Camden than in any other district grouping we examined. By 2003, there was almost 15 times as much property wealth per student in the I and J suburbs (\$882,773) than in Camden (\$60,553). That year, the state average of about \$600,000 in property wealth per student was ten times higher than in Camden.

Strapped for money to pay for public services, distressed cities could either increase their property wealth or raise local tax rates. It would not be an easy task to reverse the process of decline and replace lost property wealth. As a result, many cities were forced to raise taxes, even though higher taxes might prevent potential residents and employers from moving in.

Figure 3.17 compares the total equalized tax rates in Camden with the average rates in the other Abbott cities, the wealthiest suburbs, and across the state.²⁶ Camden's rate was 4.2 in 1998, almost twice as high as in the wealthiest suburbs the same year (2.2) and much higher than the 3.0 maximum recommended by two state commissions created to study local taxes in New Jersey. On the whole, local tax rates in New Jersey have declined between 1998 and 2003: by 11 percent across the state and 16 percent in Camden. In 2003, Camden's total equalized tax rate was 3.6, still a great deal higher than the state average of 2.3. The average rate in all of the other Abbott

FIGURE | 3.17

Average Equalized Tax Rate by District Grouping, 1998–2003



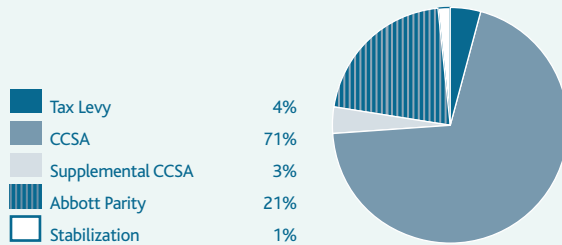
SOURCE | New Jersey Department of Community Affairs: Office of Local Government Services, 1998–2003

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FIGURE | 3.18

General Education Funding by Source: Camden, 2003–04



SOURCE | New Jersey Department of Education, Office of School Funding, 2002–03 to 2003–04

cities was lower than Camden's at 2.8 that same year.

School Finance

Abbott districts receive two kinds of state aid in addition to funding available to other school districts in New Jersey. The first type, Abbott Parity Aid, ensures that Abbott districts have as much money per student to support a general education as the most successful suburban districts in the state. Abbott Parity Aid has been distributed to Abbott districts every year since 1997–98. Abbott districts must apply to the state to receive a second type of state aid, which we call Additional Abbott Aid. Along with other state and federal funding, Additional Abbott Aid supports programs and services such as intensive early literacy, full-day Kindergarten, on-site school clinics, and after-school and nutrition programs.²⁷

In this section, we examine the resources that Camden has had to support its educational program for students in Kindergarten through Grade 12. General education fund-

ing and supplemental programs funding are presented separately below.

General education funding. As a result of property wealth differences and New Jersey's heavy reliance on the property tax to fund public schools, a large funding gap opened between New Jersey's urban and suburban school districts. By 1989, New Jersey's low-income communities had \$1,500 less per student in general education funding.²⁸ Although the State Constitution grants the right to a "thorough and efficient" education, the reality was that students in low-income, urban districts did not receive the same educational resources as their suburban peers. From the 1970s onward, education stakeholders throughout the state fought for the rights of children in urban school districts to have the same resources as their peers. The lawsuits, known collectively as *Abbott v. Burke*, were integral to this effort.

In 1996, the state legislature enacted the Comprehensive Educational Improvement and Financing Act of 1996 (CEIFA) to restructure the state's school finance system.

CEIFA provided several forms of state aid that are still distributed to school districts to this day. Core Curriculum Standards Aid (CCSA) was intended to make up the difference between what school districts could afford and what the state—at the time—considered to be an adequate level of school funding to support a thorough and efficient education. Some districts also receive Supplemental CCSA to ease their local tax burdens. A third type of funding that comes from CEIFA, Stabilization Aid, goes to districts that might otherwise lose too much CCSA from year to year because of enrollment changes.

In a groundbreaking Abbott decision, the New Jersey Supreme Court found the school funding solution under CEIFA to be unconstitutional. The justices said that the cost of education in the poorest urban districts should be determined by what successful districts spend and identified the wealthiest suburban (I and J) districts as their standard. Since 1997–98, Abbott Parity Aid makes up the difference between what these urban districts could afford

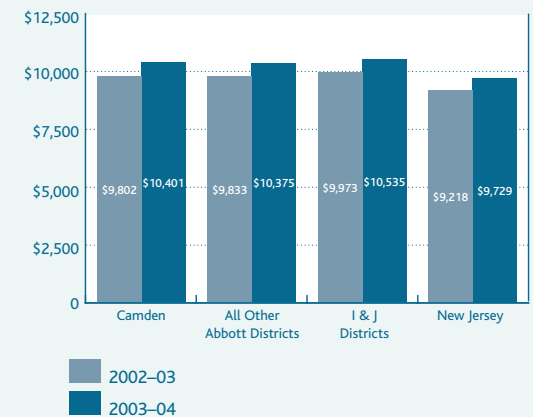
(plus CCSA) and what the wealthiest districts actually spent on average.²⁹

Figure 3.18 shows the sources of funding for Camden’s schools in 2003–04. Camden draws the largest portion (71%) of its revenue from CCSA. Abbott Parity Aid made up one fifth (21%) of the money that the Camden Board of Education had to spend on general education. Just four percent of the revenue comes from local taxes.

We now compare Camden’s general education revenues with the other Abbott districts, the I and J districts, and the state average (Figure 3.19). The figures have all been divided by the resident enrollment in each category to provide per student amounts. Camden had about the same amount of general education funding per student as the other Abbott districts in both years. For example, the district had \$9,802 per student in 2002–03 compared to \$9,833 in the other Abbott districts on average. Camden’s general education revenues were also about the same as the average of the I and J districts in both years.

FIGURE | 3.19

Per Student General Education Funding by District Grouping, 2002–03 and 2003–04



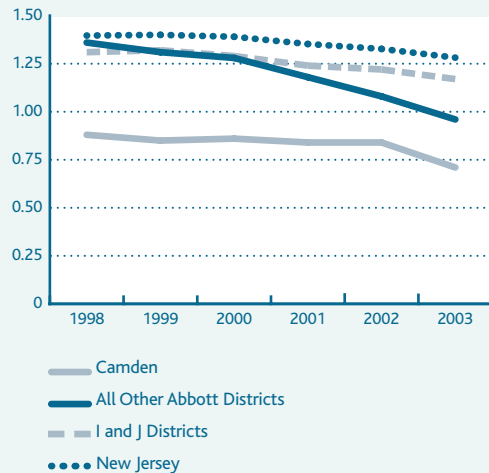
SOURCE | New Jersey Department of Education, Office of School Funding, 2002–2004

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FIGURE | 3.20

Average School Tax Rate by District Grouping, 1998–2003



SOURCE | New Jersey Department of Community Affairs: Office of Local Government Services, 1998–2003

Figure 3.19 shows that Abbott Parity Aid, in combination with other state aid, now provides the Abbott districts with a per-student general education budget on par with the wealthiest suburban school districts. We turn now to school taxes, the portion of local taxes that pays for public education. Like the total tax rate, a school tax rate is expressed as a fraction of the assessed property value. An important benefit of the Abbott decisions was to allow the urban districts to freeze locally-supported school spending at the 1997 level. If property values rise and school spending is frozen, then school tax rates should drop in proportion.

In Camden, we know that property wealth increased slightly between 1998 and 2003. As expected, Camden's school tax rates declined (Figure 3.20). In 1998, Camden homeowners paid \$0.88 in school taxes for every \$100 of assessed property value, a lower rate than was paid in the wealthiest suburbs (1.31), the other Abbott cities (1.36) or across the state on average (1.39). School tax rates also fell between 1998 and 2003 in the other district

groupings we examined. By 2003, Camden's school tax rate was 0.71, lower than in the other Abbott cities (0.96), the wealthiest suburbs (1.17), or the state on average (1.28). Camden's school tax rates fell 19 percent during this time period, less sharply than in the other Abbott cities (29%), but more than in the wealthiest suburbs (10%), and statewide (8%).

Supplemental programs funding. To be ready and successful learners, the children and youth of Camden have unique needs for health, nutrition, and social services that must be addressed. There are three sources of money to support supplemental programs in Abbott districts: one comes from the federal government and two from the state. The federal funding is called Title I and provides funding for schools serving children from low-income families. The money is intended to improve educational quality and give extra help to struggling students. The second supplemental programs funding source, Demonstrably Effective Program Aid (DEPA), has been provided by the state since CEIFA.

DEPA is targeted to school districts serving poor children and calculated on a per student basis. Both Abbott and non-Abbott districts may receive Title I and DEPA funds.

Only Abbott districts receive Additional Abbott Aid, the third source of supplemental programs funding. Each Abbott district must apply to the state for Additional Abbott Aid and justify its request with evidence of student need. The New Jersey Department of Education reviews district requests and issues its decisions. The state may fully fund, deny portions, or fund programs at lower levels than requested by the districts. School districts may appeal the state's decision in court. Not surprisingly, this process has been a source of conflict between the Abbott districts and the New Jersey Department of Education since it began in 1999.

How did the Camden Board of Education support its supplemental programs and how much money did it have? In 2003–04, Camden had \$1,802 per student to support its supplemental programs; slightly less than the other Abbott districts with an average supple-

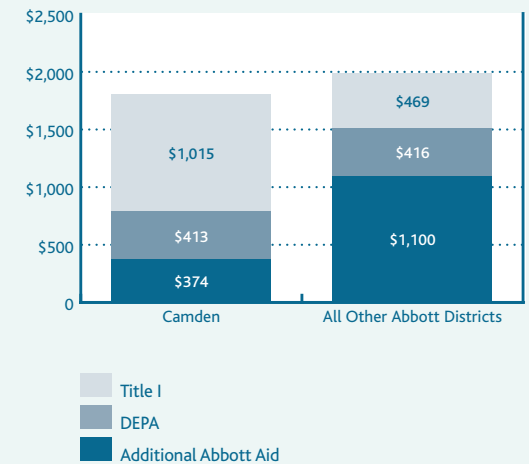
mental programs budget of \$1,985 per student (Figures 3.21 and 3.22). Figure 3.21 shows that Camden's supplemental aid was mostly from federal Title I funds (\$1,015 per student). On average, the other Abbott districts received a larger portion from the state, \$1,100 from Additional Abbott Aid and \$416 from DEPA.³⁰

District staff told us that the supplemental program budgeting process was especially difficult for Camden in 2003–04 because of disagreements with the New Jersey Department of Education. Camden asked for \$33 million to support supplemental programs and the state only approved \$21 million. Although the Supreme Court ordered the State to provide Camden with the original \$33 million, by the end of the 2003–04 school year, the district had received only about \$5 million. Data collected for this report show the final amount of Additional Abbott Aid provided by the state to be about \$6.4 million.

Figure 3.22 shows that the district's supplemental programs support decreased by about \$1,000 per student between 2003–03 and 2003–04. The per student amount Cam-

FIGURE | 3.21

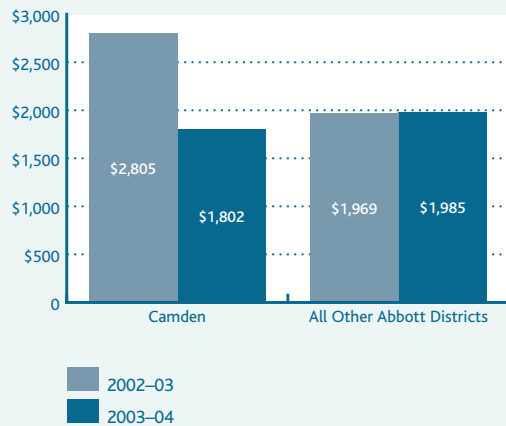
Per Student Supplemental Program Aid by Source:
Camden and All Other Abbott Districts, 2003–04



SOURCE | New Jersey Department of Education, Office of School Funding, 2002–03 and 2003–04

FIGURE | 3.22

Per Student Supplemental Program Aid: Camden and All Other Abbott Districts, 2002–03 and 2003–04



SOURCE | New Jersey Department of Education, Office of School Funding, 2002–03 and 2003–04

den received in 2003–04 was much closer to the average of the other Abbott districts than the per student amount received in 2002–03.

Abbott Parity Aid supports only the “first half” of the required full day of Kindergarten. The remaining money (the “second half” of the day) must come from Additional Abbott Aid. The district needed more than \$7 million of Additional Abbott Aid to cover the cost of the second half-day of Kindergarten in 2003–04. The Camden Board of Education received less than \$7 million in Additional Abbott Aid that year, however.

The New Jersey Department of Education did not fully fund any district’s 2004–05 request for Additional Abbott Aid. Nineteen school districts appealed the state’s decision. Camden Board of Education requested \$82 million (part of which was to make up for the funding shortage of 2003–04). The Department of Education approved only \$2.2 million of its request citing inefficiencies and disallowed programs. After the district appealed, the Courts ultimately awarded

\$35 million to support Abbott supplemental programs in Camden.

K-12 Leadership

School Leadership Councils

State regulations require every school in the Abbott districts to have a School Leadership Council (SLC). The SLC is a group that serves on a volunteer basis to represent school staff and the neighborhood. Their primary purpose is to help improve teaching and learning. They do this by taking part in program planning and decision-making and encouraging broad participation by school staff and neighborhood stakeholders. Typically, SLC membership includes the principal, teachers, non-instructional staff, parents, community representatives and the Whole School Reform Facilitator. Sometimes the SLC includes students. Some SLC members are elected by the groups they represent, such as staff and parents. The principal appoints community representatives from a broad and diverse candidate pool. SLC members serve at least two

years with staggered terms. The SLC should meet at least once a month.

SLCs should take part in a wide variety of activities to carry out their functions, including: reviewing needs assessment and achievement data, reviewing school-based budgets prepared by the central office and making recommendations to amend them, and participating in training provided by the district or New Jersey Department of Education. SLCs that are trained to perform personnel functions may also interview school principal candidates and recommend candidates to the district's Superintendent. The following types of training should be made available to SLC members by the district or the New Jersey Department of Education: SLC member roles and responsibilities; budgeting and planning; needs assessment; state and federal laws and regulations; the CCCS; personnel functions; and programs for English language learners and students with disabilities.

While representation on SLCs differed among the schools we visited in Camden,

typically, they were made up of the required members listed above.

Along with the other Abbott districts, Camden used school-based budgeting in the early years of Abbott. These budgets were "zero-based," that is, they specified each and every needed program and staff member from the ground up. In general, SLCs took the lead in school-based planning and budgeting efforts, getting input from a variety of school staff and community members on needed programs and staffing.

In all Abbott districts, control over budgeting and planning moved away from the schools and their SLCs and returned to the district office in 2002–03. Since then, budgeting has begun with the district's business administrator, who sets school budgets based on a state template, previous spending levels, and a cost-of-living increase. The district's business administrator sends a copy of each school's budget to its SLC for review and modification. Any SLC request over the allowance must be reviewed for approval by the district office. SLCs may then be asked to sup-

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port and sign their school's budget before it is packaged with the district's budget and sent to the New Jersey Department of Education.

The SLC representatives we spoke with expressed concern about the loss of decision-making authority and talked about the negative effect it has had on participation on the committee. Members describe the process of budgeting and planning as being more constrained: SLCs are now seen more as "rubber stamp organizations" and places where teachers can discuss what they would like to see, but have little power to make anything happen. We also learned that SLC meetings in some schools were put on hold several times in 2003–04 while the school board determined what types of decisions SLCs would be allowed to make.

In contrast, all SLCs reported participating in the development of their school's three-year operational plan. Before developing the plan, members reviewed student data such as test scores and grades, attendance, discipline, retention and dropout rates, and violence and vandalism rates; and teacher, parent, and

student feedback from surveys. This information was used to identify school goals and resource needs; SLCs also review new data to determine their goals for each year. All six SLCs had the opportunity to vote in support of their schools' plans and budgets, as required by Abbott.

Some SLCs told us about their efforts to address pressing issues in their schools. For example, at Washington Elementary, the SLC met more frequently to discuss the upcoming change to a magnet school. The primary focus of Woodrow Wilson High School's SLC in 2003–04 was addressing class coverage brought on by low teacher attendance, vacant positions, and a shortage of substitute teachers. One SLC representative told us they are constantly making recommendations on ways to address the problem.

With respect to training, the SLC representatives we spoke with said that they had attended workshops in previous years on development of the three-year operational plan, the budgeting process, and how to conduct needs assessments. The district office

also posted PowerPoint presentations on the Internet as a reference for SLC members. In 2003–04, none of the SLCs in the schools we visited received any professional development, however.

Abbott Advisory Council

The Abbott Advisory Council (AAC), formerly known as the district Whole School Reform Steering Committee is a joint steering committee for whole school reform, represented by district and community representatives. The responsibilities of the Abbott Advisory Council are to: 1) review the district's policies and procedures that implement the Abbott reforms; 2) review the district's three-year operational plan and annual modifications prior to submission for board approval; and 3) assess efforts to improve teaching and learning in the district, celebrate successes, and identify ways to overcome obstacles that may exist.

Each Abbott district should have an Abbott Advisory Council. In violation of current state regulations, Camden does not have an Abbott Advisory Council. A member of our com-

munity review team noted that the absence of a districtwide Abbott council profoundly limits the district's ability to discharge its policymaking and oversight functions under Abbott.

K-12 Student Outcomes

Years ago, educational success was mostly determined by student, family, and neighborhood characteristics. As education stakeholders, our job is to ensure that this is no longer true. The educational success of our children is a product of things we can change for the better: opportunities for students to learn; staff to teach students, and supports for that staff; financial resources to work with; the educational environment; and the leadership and planning at the school, district, and state levels to guide the whole process.

The Abbott remedies were intended to support efforts of schools, districts, parents and advocates to improve these elements of effective schooling. We cannot understand how schools or districts are doing—or help

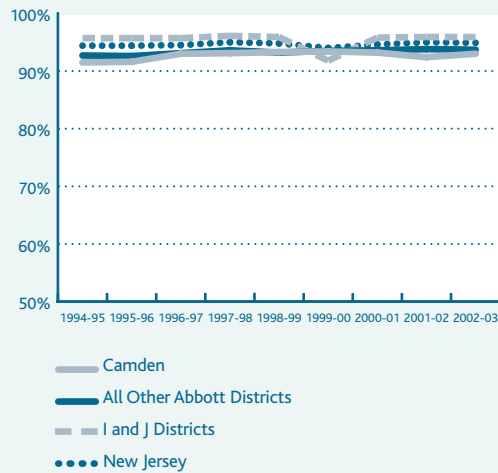
Each Abbott district should have an Abbott Advisory Council to review district policies and procedures and implement the reforms.

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K-12 Education

FIGURE | 3.23

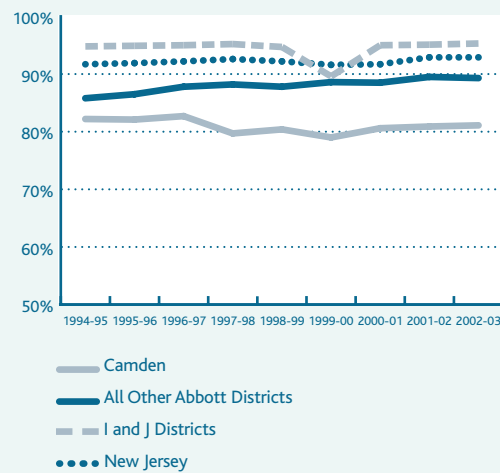
Student Attendance by District Grouping: Elementary Schools, 1994-95 to 2002-03



SOURCE | School Report Card, 1994-95 to 2002-03

FIGURE | 3.24

Student Attendance by District Grouping: High Schools, 1994-95 to 2002-03



SOURCE | School Report Card, 1994-95 to 2002-03

them to do better—unless we consider *all* of them. We encourage readers to review and consider the findings presented in this section in light of the material we have presented up to this point and the material that follows in Section 5 of this report.

Student Attendance

Students who feel safe at school and are engaged in their academic work tend to go to school more often. Of course, students also miss school because of other reasons such as poor health and family problems. In general, we think that student attendance is an important indicator that school is a positive experience for children and youth and that the students' families, the district, and the larger community are addressing any obstacles to attendance that may exist. It is presented here as a leading indicator: students can only benefit from opportunities to learn if they attend school regularly. Below, we examine student attendance rates in elementary and high schools separately.

At the elementary school level, attendance across New Jersey was about 95 percent in 1994–95 and remained steady through 2002–03 (Figure 3.23). Camden’s elementary school student attendance was at 92 percent in 1994–95 and has remained at that rate through 2002–03. In most years, about 95 percent of elementary students in the I and J districts attended school on any given day.

High school attendance rates were lower across the state when compared to the elementary schools (Figure 3.24). In every year between 1994–95 and 2002–03, fewer students attended Camden high schools on an average day than in any other district grouping we analyzed (between 79 and 82 percent). Compared to Camden, high school attendance was higher in the other Abbott districts and improved from 86 to 89 percent over the years. The high school attendance rate remained at about 92 percent across the state. High school attendance was highest in the wealthiest suburbs at about 95 percent, with

the exception of 1999–00 when it dropped to 90 percent.

Child and Youth Well-Being

Children and youth who are physically, socially, and emotionally healthy are better able to learn at school. Many of Abbott’s supplemental programs have as their purpose to improve the well-being of children and youth of New Jersey’s cities. School staff either provide direct services to children and their families or help them to link with needed services already provided in the community. Service provision and linkage are essential parts of the jobs of health and social services coordinators, parent-community coordinators, family liaisons, social workers, and guidance counselors, to name a few. As a central public institution of the urban community, schools play a critical role in ensuring the well-being of children and youth. Schools are not alone in their responsibility—parents, elected officials, and public and private agencies in the city must all play a role. As the African proverb so

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FIGURE | 3.25

Child and Youth Well-Being Indicators: Camden and New Jersey, 1997–2002

Indicator	Time Period	Camden				New Jersey	
		Time 1		Time 2		Time 1	Time 2
		NUMBER	PER 1,000	NUMBER	PER 1,000	PER 1,000	PER 1,000
Child Death	1997–2001	10	0.5	3	0.1	0.2	0.1
Teen Death	1997–2001	18	2.5	6	0.8	0.4	0.3
Births to Teens (10–14)	1998–2002	15	3.9	16	4.1	0.6	0.5
Births to Teens (15–19)	1998–2002	524	143.1	374	102.1	34.1	28.8
Child Abuse and Neglect	1998–2002	596	19.0	375	12.0	4.2	3.4

SOURCE | New Jersey Center for Health Statistics, 1998–2002; 2000 US Census; Annie E. Casey Foundation, 2004 Kids Count; Association for Children of New Jersey, 1997–2002 Kids Count.

famously says: “It takes a whole village to raise a child.”

In Figure 3.25, we present a small number of citywide indicators of child and youth well-being for Camden and the State of New Jersey. Camden’s teen death, teen births (both age groups), and substantiated child abuse and neglect rates were higher than the state average at both time points shown. The child death rate was higher in Camden than it was across the state on average in 1997. Camden’s child death rate improved (decreased) to the same level as the state average in 2001, however. Four out of five of Camden’s child and youth well-being indicators show positive movement: rates of child death, teen death, births to teens ages 15 to 19, and child abuse and neglect rates decreased over time. Births to teens ages 10 to 14 remained at about the same level between 1998 and 2002 (3.9 and 4.1 per thousand, respectively), several times higher than the average for the state of New Jersey (0.6 and 0.5 per thousand, respectively).

School Safety

For many years, federal law has required every school and district to report the violence and vandalism that occur in schools. The New Jersey Department of Education compiles annual counts and reports them publicly. The No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) specified a standard of safety beyond which schools are defined as “persistently dangerous.” Under the “Unsafe School Choice Option,” the law provides that families of children who are victims of violence or who go to a persistently dangerous school may choose to send their child to another public school in the district or a charter school in the same city.

A school is called persistently dangerous if it meets either one of the two following conditions for three consecutive years:

- 1) Seven or more of the following types of incidents, known as Category A offenses: firearm offenses; aggravated assaults on another student; assaults with a weapon on another student; and assaults on a school district staff member.

- 2) An index rating of 1 or more Category B incidents (calculated by a ratio of the sum of incidents over the square root of the enrollment), including: simple assault, weapons possession or sales (other than a firearm), gang fight, robbery or extortion, sex offense, terroristic threat, arson, sales or distribution of drugs, and harassment and bullying.

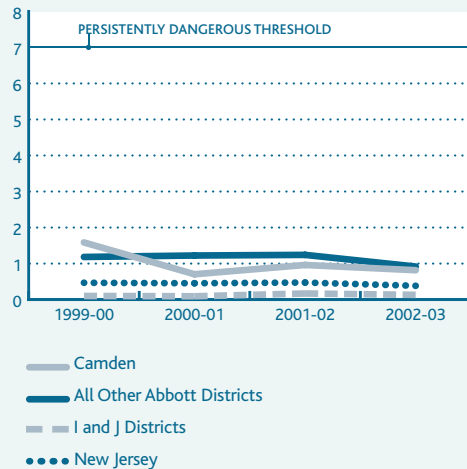
The persistently dangerous classification has been roundly criticized by many camps and on many grounds. The most important criticisms, for the purposes of this report, are related to reporting accuracy. Our first concern is the likelihood of under-reporting by schools and districts. Principals and superintendents who abide to the letter of the law feel that they are unfairly penalized while schools and districts that “fluff” their reports are not. We suspect that such “fluffing” is fairly widespread in New Jersey, considering the critical importance of school safety to parents and children and the attention given to the annual publication of such incidents. Under newly adopted regulations, school districts have the power to penalize any employee who

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FIGURE | 3.26

"Category A" Offenses by District Grouping: Elementary Schools, 1999–00 to 2002–03



SOURCE | New Jersey Department of Education: Office of Program Support Services, Division of Student Services, 1999–2003

knowingly falsifies incident reports.³¹ The new regulations do not outline what powers the New Jersey Department of Education has to penalize school districts that knowingly falsify reports.

Our second concern involves the role of interpretation. State guidelines urge schools and districts to consider if an incident is indeed an offense or merely developmentally appropriate behavior. The New Jersey Department of Education trains school district personnel on how to recognize and classify incidents. The system is not yet perfect, however.

We report information from New Jersey's Violence and Vandalism Reporting System despite our concerns for two reasons: 1) because it is the only available statewide information, and 2) because of the critical importance of school safety. Figures 3.26 through 3.29 show the number of Category A offenses and the NCLB (Category B) Index for Camden, all other Abbotts, the wealthiest districts, and the state from 1999–00 to 2002–03. Under NCLB, the persistently dangerous threshold

is the same for elementary and high schools. Incident counts and index ratings are reported separately below. Because the types of incidents that occur in elementary schools tend to differ in nature from those that occur in high schools. Schools serving students in the middle grades are included with the elementary schools.

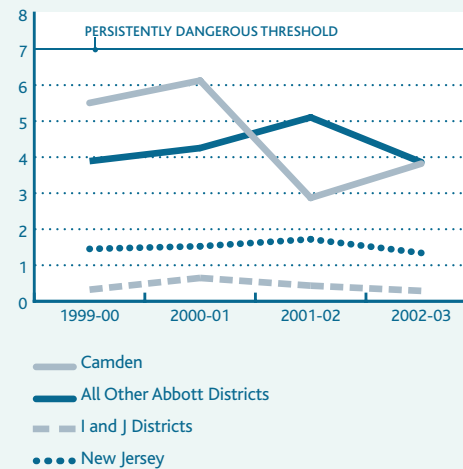
Figure 3.26 shows the number of Category A offenses that took place in elementary schools between 1999–00 and 2002–03 by district grouping. The bar that spans across the top of the chart shows the level at which, after three consecutive years, a school would be considered persistently dangerous. The most striking finding is that none of the district groupings we analyzed has an average that comes anywhere near this level. Camden's elementary schools had an average of 1.6 incidents in 1999–00, and less than one per year in 2000–01 through 2001–02. After 1999–00, Camden's elementary schools tracked the average of the other Abbott districts very closely. None of Camden's elementary schools had enough Category A incidents

to be classified as persistently dangerous during these years.³² Elementary schools in the wealthiest (I and J) districts appear much safer by this measure: they averaged less than one-tenth of an incident per school during the same time period.

Figure 3.27 shows the number of Category A offenses in high schools between 1999–00 and 2002–03 by district grouping. Camden's high schools reported that more incidents occurred in 1999–00 and 2000–01 than in 2001–02 and 2002–03. In 2000–01, the average number of incidents came very close to the persistently dangerous threshold. Clearer inspection revealed that the high district average was caused by incidents at Camden and Woodrow Wilson High Schools. For example, Camden High had seven incidents in 1999–00 and 10 incidents in the peak year of 2000–01. Camden High was not classified as persistently dangerous by this measure, because the number of Category A incidents was below seven in 2001–02 and 2002–03. High schools in the other Abbott districts averaged 3.9 Category A incidents in 1999–00,

FIGURE | 3.27

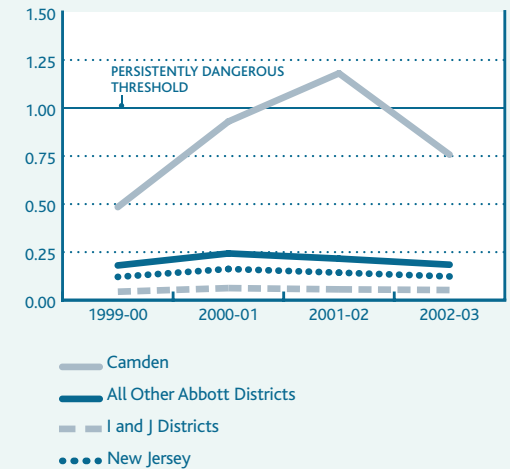
"Category A" Offenses by District Grouping: High Schools, 1999–00 to 2002–03



SOURCE | New Jersey Department of Education: Office of Program Support Services, Division of Student Services, 1999–00 to 2002–03

FIGURE | 3.28

NCLB (Category B) Index by District Grouping: Elementary Schools, 1999–00 to 2002–03



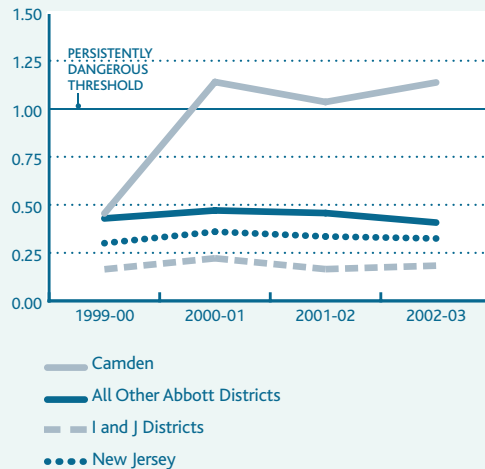
SOURCE | New Jersey Department of Education: Office of Program Support Services, Division of Student Services, 1999–00 to 2002–03

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FIGURE | 3.29

NCLB (Category B) Index by District Grouping: High Schools, 1999–00 to 2002–03



SOURCE | New Jersey Department of Education: Office of Program Support Services, Division of Student Services, 1999–00 to 2002–03

rising to just over four incidents per school in 2001–02, and falling again to just under four in 2002–03. The high schools in the wealthiest districts appear to be the safest by this measure, averaging under one violent incident each year during the same time period.

Turning to the NCLB (Category B) index in elementary schools, Figure 3.28 shows that Camden elementary and middle schools had a higher rate of Category B incidents than did schools in any other district grouping. The index rose from 0.5 in 1999–00 to 1.2 in 2001–02, above the persistently dangerous threshold. The index dropped again to 0.8, just below the threshold. Closer inspection revealed that four middle schools met or went over the persistently dangerous threshold (1.0) during this period; two (South Camden Alternative and East Camden Middle Schools) did so over a continuous, three-year period, qualifying them to be classified as persistently dangerous. Six elementary schools met or surpassed the threshold; only one, Bonsall Elementary, maintained that level over a continuous, three-year period. In contrast, the

average NCLB (Category B) index in the other district groupings has been stable over the time period with the wealthiest districts the lowest, the state average slightly above that, and the other Abbott districts just above the others at about 0.2.

Figure 3.29 shows that Camden high schools had higher rates of Category B incidents than did any other district grouping between 2000–01 and 2002–03. The NCLB index rose in 2000–01, bringing the district's index score to 1.1, above the persistently dangerous threshold, in contrast, the other district groupings remained relatively stable over the four-year period. Camden High was over the NCLB (Category B) index threshold from 2000–01 to 2002–03, earning the school a persistently dangerous classification. Woodrow Wilson High was over the NCLB threshold in 2002–03 only.

Given the criticisms of the reporting system we outlined above, we need to know how well the schools are reporting. Even so, it is likely that some Camden schools are not safe places for students to learn. A group of

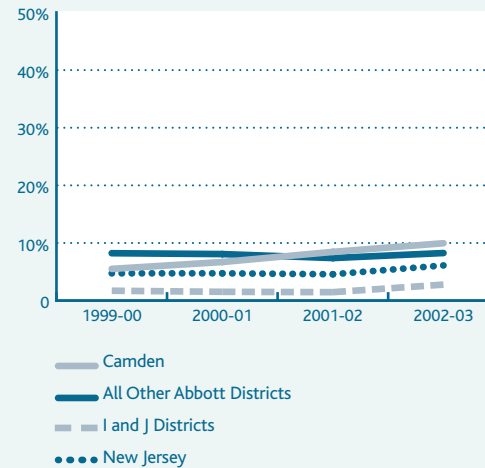
stakeholders, the Camden Collaborative, was formed in 2003 to address school violence. Based on information provided to us by the district, it is unclear what measures have been taken to date by this group to 1) use this data to identify and intervene with at-risk students or 2) implement programs, policies, and practices that are known to be effective at reducing school violence.

Suspension

Students are suspended from school for reasons usually explained in a district's disciplinary code. Low suspension rates suggest a number of positive things about a district's schools. For example, suspension rates may be low because the students genuinely behave well, they understand and accept the rules, or because the disruptions that occur are addressed without removing students from the classroom. Figures 3.30 and 3.31 show suspension rates in Camden compared with the other Abbott districts, the I and J districts, and the state average. Disciplinary issues and suspension rates differ between elemen-

FIGURE | 3.30

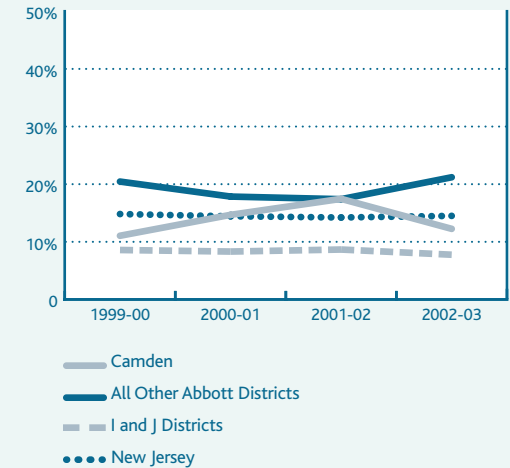
Suspension Rate by District Grouping: Elementary Schools, 1999-00 to 2002-03



SOURCE | School Report Card, 1995-96 to 2002-03

FIGURE | 3.31

Suspension Rate by District Grouping: High Schools, 1999-00 to 2002-03



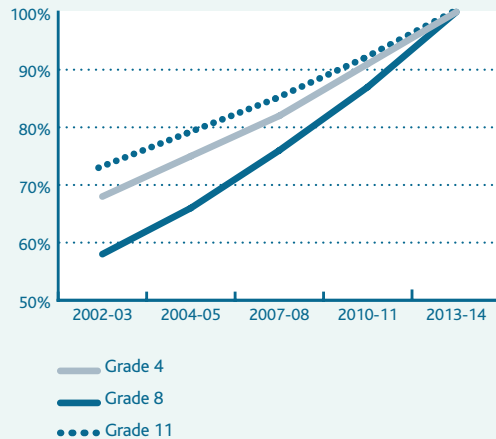
SOURCE | School Report Card, 1995-96 to 2002-03

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FIGURE | 3.32

New Jersey's Adequate Yearly Progress Targets for Language Arts Literacy



SOURCE | New Jersey Department of Education: Office of Title I Program Planning and Accountability, September 2003

tary and high schools, so we examine them separately. Schools serving students in the middle grades are included with the elementary schools.

In 1999–00, the suspension rate in Camden's elementary schools (6%) was slightly above the state average of five percent.³³ Over the time period shown, elementary school suspension rates rose in every district grouping we examined. Figure 3.30 shows that suspension rates went up more in Camden than in any other district grouping. By 2002–03, elementary school suspension rates were three percent in the wealthiest districts, six percent across the state, eight percent in the other Abbott districts, and 10 percent in Camden.

Suspension rates were higher in the high schools in all district groupings from 1999–00 to 2002–03 (Figure 3.31). At 11 percent, Camden's 1999–00 high school suspension rate was lower than the state (15%) and the other Abbott districts (20%). The rate in Camden increased for the next two years and was back down to 12 percent in 2002–03—

below the state average (15%). The suspension rate in the other Abbott districts remained well above the state average throughout this time period.

Student Achievement

The federal No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB) requires states to have curriculum standards, conduct annual testing, and report test results on a school-by-school basis. An important NCLB goal is for every student to meet state standards by 2013–14, including students in demographic groups that have historically underperformed on standardized tests. Under NCLB, test results must be reported separately for Asian, Black, Hispanic, Native American, and White students; and students with disabilities; English language learners; and students who are eligible for free-or reduced-price lunch.

In New Jersey, the fourth grade test is called the ASK4 (Assessment of Skills and Knowledge). According to the New Jersey Department of Education it is essentially the same test as the former ESPA (Elementary

School Proficiency Assessment). The 8th grade test is called the GEPA (Grade Eight Proficiency Assessment). The 11th grade test is the High School Proficiency Assessment (HSPA). Before 2001–02 high school students took a different test called the HSPT (High School Proficiency Test). The HSPT and HSPA are different tests, so results for each are shown separately below.

NCLB also requires states to identify a “target” percentage of students who will pass each test each year. These targets must gradually increase until 2013–14, when every student in every demographic group is expected to pass every test. Under NCLB, a school is making “adequate yearly progress” (AYP) only if every group of students meets the state’s target in every test. Figures 3.32 and 3.33 show New Jersey’s language arts literacy and math targets. Note that the targets start at different levels in 2002–03 and gradually increase to universal pass rates in 2013–14.

With some exceptions, schools with a subgroup that misses an AYP benchmark for

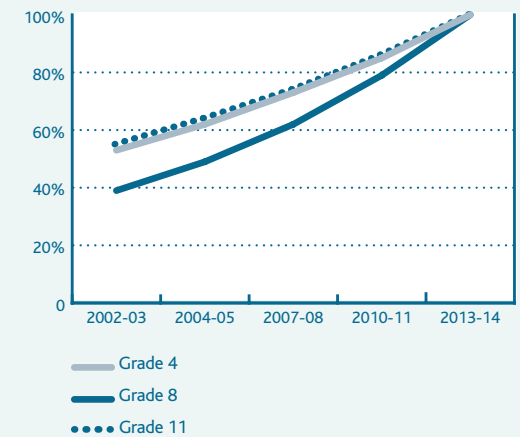
two or more years in a row must undertake a series of actions outlined in Figure 3.34.

There are many ways to examine achievement test results; each way tells a part of the story. *Proficiency percentages* tell us how many students met standards for their grade level, but do not tell us about small or large changes that did not cross the state’s official proficiency cutpoints. *Average test scores* show changes that may not register in a proficiency analysis, but do not tell us how many students met the state’s standards.

Below, we present proficiency percentages and average scale scores for the language arts literacy (LAL) and math tests at Grades 4, 8, and 11, respectively. First, we compare average scores over time for general education students in Camden, all other Abbotts, the wealthiest (I and J) districts in the state, and the state overall. Second, we show the percent of Camden’s general education students scoring within the three proficiency categories over time. Third, we compare Camden’s major student demographic groups according to the percent scoring in the three

FIGURE | 3.33

New Jersey’s Adequate Yearly Progress Targets for Math



SOURCE | New Jersey Department of Education: Office of Title I Program Planning and Accountability, September 2003

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FIGURE | 3.34

Categories and Action Steps for Schools Not Making Adequate Yearly Progress

Years not Meeting Standards	Category	Action Steps
1	Early Warning	No actions are required under NCLB, but schools and districts should identify areas that need to be improved.
2	School Improvement	Parents are notified and given the option to transfer their children to a school that made AYP. Schools must identify areas needing improvement and work with parents, teachers, and outside experts to develop a plan.
3	School Improvement	Tutoring and other supplemental services must be made available.
4	Corrective Action	School choice and supplemental services are still available. In addition, schools must undertake at least one of a series of corrective actions, including: staff replacement; curriculum adoption; decreased school authority; external consultant to advise the school; extended school day or year; and/or reorganize school governance.
5	Corrective Action	School must develop a plan for alternate school governance. Choice, supplemental services, and other corrective actions still required.
6	Restructuring	Implement alternate school governance developed in year five.

SOURCE | New Jersey Department of Education: Office of Title I Program Planning and Accountability, September 2003

proficiency categories in 2002–03. Fourth, we present schools that did not make Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) in 2003–04. Finally, in recognition that district averages may mask important differences between schools, we highlight schools that did well on each test and schools that improved the most over time.

Grade 4: ESPA/NJASK 4. Nationally, reading achievement scores of students in Grade 4 have not improved since 1992. Math scores have improved by 10 percent between 1990 and 2003 nationwide, but only by four percent since 2000.³⁴ We turn now to examine the results of the language arts literacy test given to Grade 4 New Jersey students with particular interest in changes since the Abbott reforms went into effect. Abbott school funding increased in 1997–98, but 1999–00 was when the first wave of Abbott schools started implementing Whole School Reform.³⁵ Students tested in 1999–00 experienced one year at most of any instructional improvements brought about by Abbott. In contrast, students tested in 2002–03 could

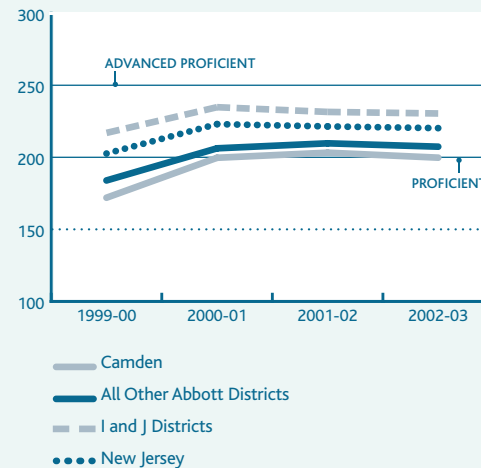
have experienced up to four years of these improvements if they were enrolled in an Abbott school since 1999–00.

Given the potential changes to the instructional program, resources, teaching, and leadership, we might expect to see student performance begin to improve over this period. Any positive effects of Whole School Reform, however, have taken five or more years to occur in other school districts throughout the country. Findings presented earlier in this report, suggest that Camden schools implemented Whole School Reform with less rigor than was intended by the state Supreme Court.

The most striking feature of Figure 3.35 is the increase between 1999–00 and 2000–01 in all of the district groupings we examined. None of the district groupings showed substantial improvements in the average language arts literacy scores in the following two years. Camden language arts literacy average scores improved by 16 percent from 172 in 1999–00 to 200 in 2001–02 and remained at that level through 2002–03. On average,

FIGURE | 3.35

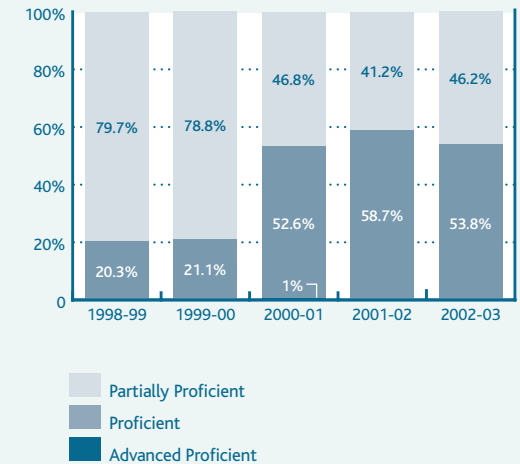
Grade 4 Language Arts Literacy Score by District Grouping, 1999–00 to 2002–03



SOURCE | New Jersey Department of Education: Office of Assessment and Evaluation, 1999–00 to 2002–03; School Report Card, 1999–00 to 2002–03

FIGURE | 3.36

Grade 4 Language Arts Literacy Proficiency: Camden, 1998–99 to 2002–03



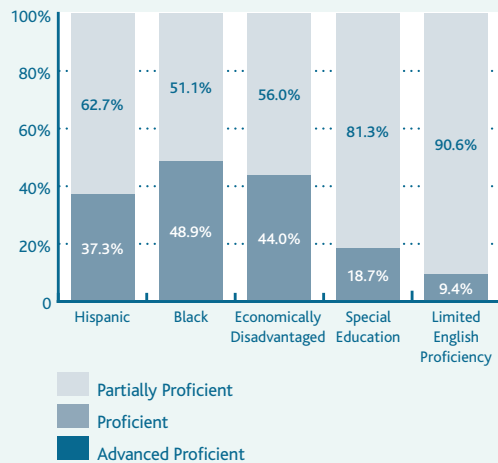
SOURCE | New Jersey Department of Education: Office of Assessment and Evaluation, 1998–99 to 2002–03; School Report Card, 1998–99 to 2002–03

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FIGURE | 3.37

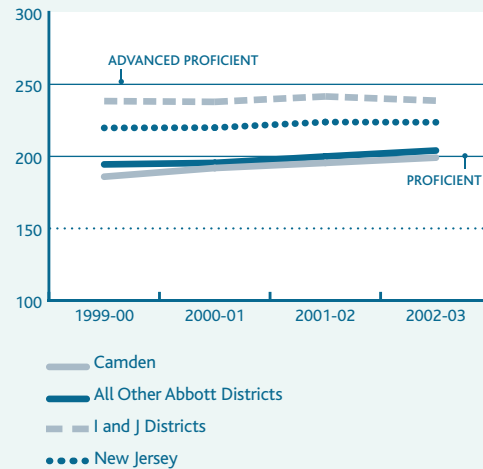
Grade 4 Language Arts Literacy Proficiency by Subgroups:
Camden, 2002–03



SOURCE | New Jersey Department of Education: Office of Assessment and Evaluation, 2002–03; School Report Card, 2002–03

FIGURE | 3.38

Grade 4 Math Average Score by District Grouping 1999–00 to
2002–03



SOURCE | New Jersey Department of Education: Office of Assessment and Evaluation, 1999–00 to 2002–03; School Report Card, 1999–00 to 2002–03

fourth graders statewide and in the wealthiest districts scored higher than did their peers in Camden or the other Abbott districts.

Figure 3.36 shows the percent of Camden's Grade 4 students scoring in the three proficiency categories in language arts literacy. The most striking feature of the chart is the change in the proportion of Grade 4 students scoring in the proficient category. In 1998–99, 20 percent of Camden's fourth graders met state standards in language arts literacy, compared to 54 percent in 2000–01.

Next, we present the 2002–03 Grade 4 language arts literacy results for the demographic groups represented in the district (Figure 3.37).^{36,37} Reading from left to right, we see the percent scoring in the three proficiency ranges among Hispanic, Black, economically disadvantaged, special education, and limited English-proficient student subgroups. (2002–03 general education results are shown in Figure 3.36). Fewer than half of the Black and economically disadvantaged children scored at or above proficient on the test (49% and 44%, respectively). About

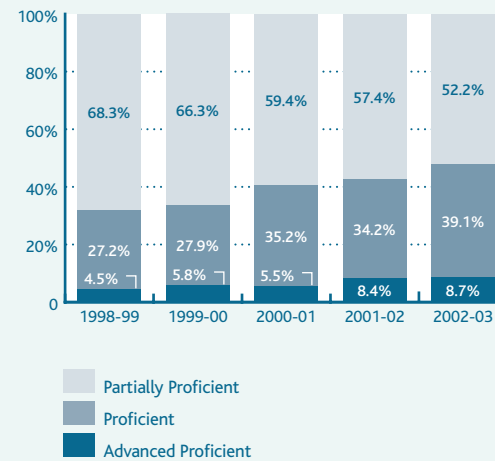
one in three Hispanic students scored at least proficient, and about one in five special education students. Only nine percent of the students who were not English-speakers achieved proficiency on the Grade 4 language arts literacy exam in 2002–03.

Grade 4 math scores also improved over time (Figures 3.38 and 3.39). Camden’s math scores improved by seven percent: from an average of 186 in 1999–00 to 199 in 2002–03. The fourth graders in the other Abbott districts scored slightly higher over time and improved by five percent (from 194 to 204). Grade 4 math scores throughout the state and in the wealthiest districts were higher, but improved less.

Camden’s Grade 4 average math scores improved over time because more and more students scored proficient and advanced proficient with each passing year (Figure 3.39). In 1998–99, about one in three fourth graders (32%) met the state’s standards in math. In 2002–03, nearly half (48%) scored at least proficient on the same exam, including nine

FIGURE | 3.39

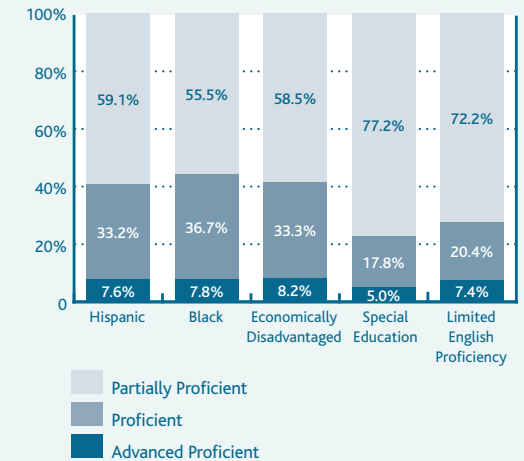
Grade 4 Math Proficiency: Camden, 1998–99 to 2002–03



SOURCE | New Jersey Department of Education: Office of Assessment and Evaluation, 1998–99 to 2002–03; School Report Card, 1998–99 to 2002–03

FIGURE | 3.40

Grade 4 Math Proficiency by Subgroup: Camden, 2002–03



SOURCE | New Jersey Department of Education: Office of Assessment and Evaluation, 2002–03; School Report Card, 2002–03

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Abbott Low-and High-Performing Schools

Under Abbott rules, elementary schools may be classified as low- or high-performing depending on how their students perform on the Grade 4 language arts literacy exam. Schools are classified as “low performing” if half or fewer of the school’s general education students score at least proficient on the test. Schools are “high performing” if their pass rates are better than the state average. The New Jersey Department of Education is required to deploy expert teams to review each low-performing school and develop and monitor a school improvement plan. High-performing schools may choose to drop or change their Whole School Reform models. Under Abbott rules, there were eight low-performing schools in Camden in 2003–04: Broadway, Parkside, Catto, Cramer, Dudley, Davis, and Bonsall Elementary Schools. There were no Abbott high-performing schools in the district.

percent who scored in the advanced proficient range.

Figure 3.40 compares the performance of Camden’s various student groups on the 2002–03 Grade 4 math test. About two in five children who are Black (44%), Hispanic (41%), or economically disadvantaged (41%) scored proficient or better on the Grade 4 math test in 2002–03. (In each of these groups, about 8% scored in the advanced proficient range.) Among special education students, about one in four (23%) met state standards, and 27 percent of students with limited English proficiency scored at least proficient on the math test that year.

Grade 4: AYP. A school must meet many requirements to make “Adequate Yearly Progress” under federal law. For the 2003–04 Grade 4 exam alone, schools had to meet 40 benchmarks to make AYP: for each of 10 demographic groups, at least 95 percent of the students had to take the test; 68 percent had to score proficient or better on the language arts literacy exam; and 53 percent had to score proficient or better on the math exam. Figure

3.41 lists the Camden schools that did not make AYP as a result of student performance on the ASK4, the number of indicators on which it fell short, and the number of years it did not meet the standard.³⁸

Eleven Camden schools missed one or more AYP benchmarks on the Grade 4 exam. Sumner and Whittier Elementary Schools missed targets for the first time in 2003–04, placing them in the “early warning” category. Schools in this category are not required to take any action under federal law, but should examine any practices that may have been responsible for missing the benchmarks. Cramer, R.C. Molina, Riletta Cream, Washington, and Yorkship Elementary Schools missed targets for the second year in a row, placing them in the “school improvement” category. Parents with children in these five schools may choose to send their children to another public school in the district or a charter school in Camden. Four schools—Bonsall, Coopers Poynt, Davis, and Sharp—missed AYP targets for the fourth year in a row, placing them under “corrective action.” Under law,

these schools must implement school choice, provide supplemental services targeted to improving test performance, and undertake at least one of a series of corrective actions listed in Figure 3.34. The schools missing the most AYP benchmarks were R.C. Molina (13) and Cramer (9). Dudley, Parkside, and Wiggins Schools fell short on one or more AYP benchmarks, but made “safe harbor” by improving by 10 percent or more from previous years on the same benchmarks.

AYP results suggest that there may be important differences in test performance *among schools* in Camden. In fact, there was a great deal of variation around the district’s 54 percent proficiency average on the 2002–03 Grade 4 language arts literacy test. Whittier and Lanning Square Schools were the highest-performers; both schools met or exceeded the state’s threshold of 68 percent proficiency within the general education population. On the other hand, in three schools, fewer than 40 percent of the general education students scored at least proficient on the same test: Dudley, Parkside, and Wiggins Elementary

Schools. Improvement over time is, of course, an important indicator that a school is moving in the right direction: Parkside, Bonsall, and Riletta Cream Elementary Schools showed the biggest gains in the average score of general education students on the Grade 4 language arts literacy test between 1999–00 and 2002–03.

Camden schools also varied widely in the performance of their general education students on the Grade 4 math test. Five schools exceeded the No Child Left Behind threshold of 53 percent: Whittier, Wilson, Riletta Cream, McGraw, and Cramer Elementary Schools. Students at Whittier, Wilson, and Riletta Cream out-performed the state average on the test that year. On the other hand, in six schools, fewer than 40 percent of the general education students met or exceeded the state standards on the same test: Sharp, Wiggins, Sumner, Yorkship, Parkside, and Dudley Elementary Schools. With respect to improvement over time, four schools stand out: Riletta Cream, Bonsall, Lanning Square, Parkside, and R.C. Molina Elementary Schools showed

FIGURE | 3.41

Camden Schools Not Making Adequate Yearly Progress: Grade 4, 2003-04

School	Number Standards Not Met	Years Not Making AYP
Bonsall	6	4
Davis	5	4
Sharp	4	4
Coopers Poynt	4	4
R C Molina	13	2
Cramer	9	2
Yorkship	6	2
Washington	3	2
Riletta Cream	2	2
Sumner	3	1
Whittier	1	1
U S Wiggins	0	1*
Parkside	0	1*
Dudley	0	1*

SOURCE | New Jersey Department of Education; Office of Title I Program Planning and Accountability, September 2004

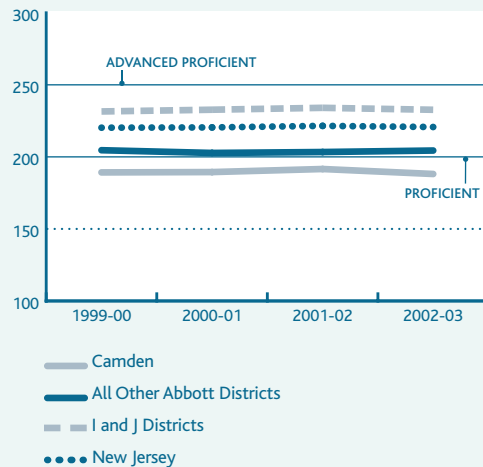
* Early Warning Hold: School met NCLB standard(s) that it had missed in the previous year.

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FIGURE | 3.42

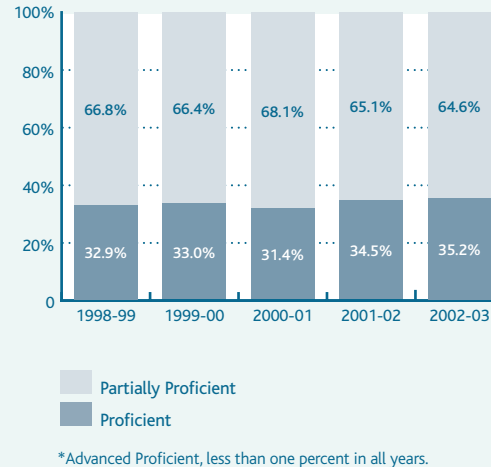
Grade 8 Language Arts Literacy Score by District Grouping, 1999–00 to 2002–03



SOURCE | New Jersey Department of Education: Office of Assessment and Evaluation, 1999–00 to 2002–03; School Report Card, 1999–00 to 2000–01

FIGURE | 3.43

Grade 8 Language Arts Literacy Proficiency: Camden, 1998–99 to 2002–03



SOURCE | New Jersey Department of Education: Office of Assessment and Evaluation, 1998–99 to 2002–03; School Report Card, 1998–99 to 2000–01.

the biggest gains in the average scores of general education students on the Grade 4 math test between 1999–00 and 2002–03.

Grade 8: GEPA. Across the nation, reading and math achievement results for Grade 8 have lagged behind those of younger students. There has been no significant improvement in Grade 8 reading between 1992 and 2003; math scores have improved by about five percent during the same time period.³⁹ In this section, we begin to explore if Abbott reforms have produced achievement results with middle school-age students. When compared to the array of instructional programs and reforms for elementary school students, however, Abbott has yet to truly provide for students in the middle grades.⁴⁰ This relative lack of attention to middle schools is not unique to New Jersey's urban school districts. We expect to see achievement test results in Camden, the other Abbotts, and indeed throughout the state that are similar to those found in the nation as a whole.

The Grade 8 language arts literacy scores showed little to no change in any of the

district groupings we analyzed (Figure 3.42). Camden's eighth graders consistently scored about 190 in all four years. Their same-grade peers scored at about 204 in the other Abbott districts, 220 in the state over all, and 232 in the wealthiest suburbs in the state.

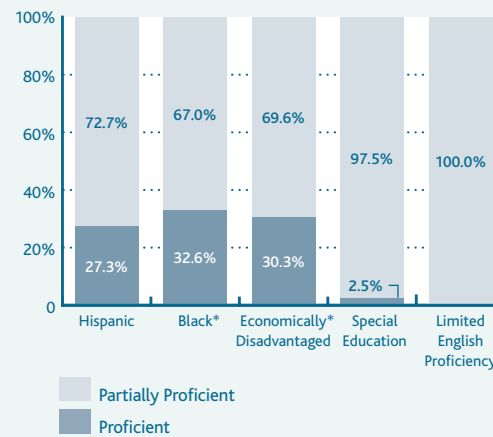
Figure 3.43 shows the distribution of Camden scores in Grade 8 language arts literacy from 1998–99 to 2002–03. In most years, about one third of Camden's eighth graders met state standards in language arts literacy.

In 2002–03, one third or fewer students in every demographic group scored at or above the proficient range of the Grade 8 language arts literacy test (Figure 3.44). About one out of three Black and economically disadvantaged students scored within the proficient range, compared to one out of four Hispanic students. Three percent of the special education students and none of the students who were not fluent English speakers met eighth grade language arts literacy standards.

On the Grade 8 math test, the district's eighth graders scored consistently about 180 over the years shown in Figure 3.45. Their

FIGURE | 3.44

Grade 8 Language Arts Literacy Proficiency by Subgroup:
Camden, 2002–03

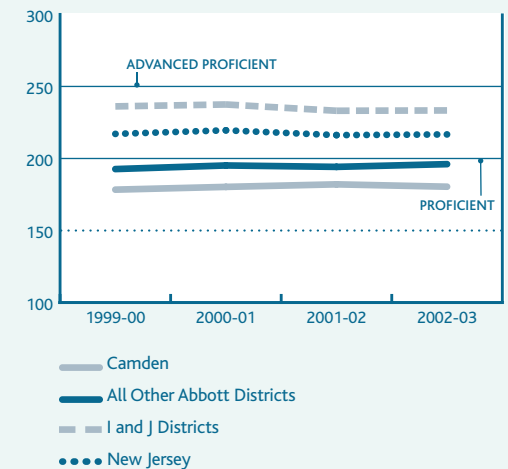


*Advanced Proficient, less than one percent.

SOURCE | New Jersey Department of Education: Office of Assessment and Evaluation, 2002–03

FIGURE | 3.45

Grade 8 Math Average Score by District Grouping,
1999–00 to 2002–03



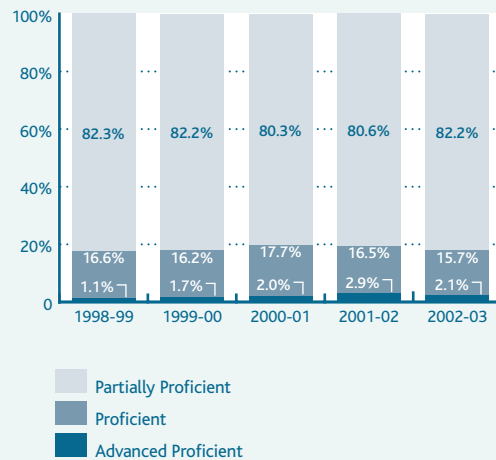
SOURCE | New Jersey Department of Education: Office of Assessment and Evaluation, 1999–00 to 2002–03; School Report Card, 1999–00 to 2000–01

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FIGURE | 3.46

Grade 8 Math Proficiency: Camden, 1998–99 to 2002–03



SOURCE | New Jersey Department of Education: Office of Assessment and Evaluation, 1998–99 to 2002–03; School Report Card, 1998–99 to 2000–01

peers in the other Abbott districts scored about 195. Eighth grade general education students in the wealthiest districts and the statewide average scored higher, but also stayed about the same over the years.

Figure 3.46 reveals the proportion of Camden’s eighth graders who scored partially proficient, proficient, and advanced proficient on the Grade 8 math exam. In 1998–99 through 2002–03, about one in five Camden eighth grade students met the state’s standards in math.

There was some variation in the performance of different student groups on the Grade 8 math test, however. About one in five Black students in the district scored at least proficient, compared to 17 percent of the economically disadvantaged students, and 11 percent of the Hispanic students. Very few (about 2%) special education and Limited English Proficient students met state standards on the Grade 8 math test in the same year.

Grade 8: AYP. Eight Camden schools missed one or more Grade 8 AYP benchmarks. South Camden Alternative Middle

School missed AYP targets for the second year in a row, placing it in the “school improvement” category. Parents with children in South Camden may choose to send their children to another public school in the district or a charter school in Camden. Seven schools—Bonsall, Coopers Poynt, East Camden, Hatch, Morgan Village, Pyne Poynt, and Veterans Memorial—missed AYP targets for the fourth year in a row, placing them under “corrective action.” Under law, these schools must implement school choice, provide supplemental services targeted to improving test performance, and undertake at least one of a series of corrective actions listed in Figure 3.34. The schools missing the most AYP benchmarks were Hatch and Morgan Village with 11, and Pyne Poynt with 10.

Performance on the Grade 8 tests varied widely among Camden’s schools. Two schools really stood out, exceeding both No Child Left Behind thresholds: Forest Hill and Riletta Cream. All (100%) of the general education students at Forest Hill scored proficient or better on the Grade 8 language arts literacy test.

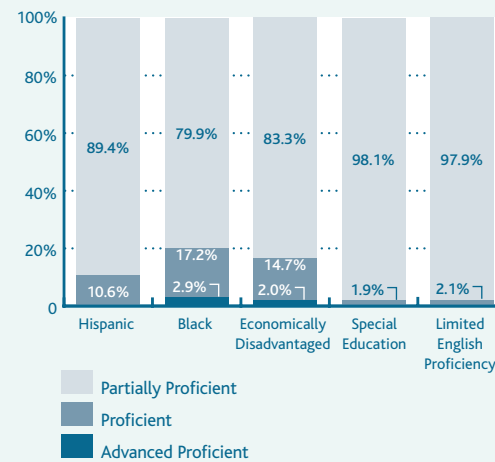
Fewer than 40 percent met or exceeded the state standards on the language arts literacy test in four schools: Veterans Memorial, East Camden, Pyne Poynt, and Morgan Village. Three more—in addition to these four—missed the math threshold: Hatch Middle School, and Cooper's Poynt and Bonsall Elementary Schools.

Two schools showed general education gains on both Grade 8 tests between 1999–00 and 2002–03: Hatch Middle and Riletta Cream Elementary School. The average scores in math also improved at Veteran's and East Camden Middle Schools.

Grade 11: HSPT/HSPA. The United States Department of Education has collected achievement test data from students in Grade 12 since 1990 as part of its National Assessment of Educational Progress. The results of this study reveal little change in the reading or math scores of high school seniors throughout the time period. We suspect, along with many other education observers, that this lack of progress is the result of a relative lack of attention to high schools compared to

FIGURE | 3.47

Grade 8 Math Proficiency by Subgroup: Camden, 2002–03



SOURCE | New Jersey Department of Education: Office of Assessment and Evaluation, 2002-03

FIGURE | 3.48

Camden Schools Not Making Adequate Yearly Progress: Grade 8, 2003-04

School	Number Standards Not Met	Years Not Making AYP
Hatch	11	4
Morgan Village	11	4
Pyne Poynt	10	4
East Camden	8	4
Bonsall	6	4
Coopers Poynt	5	4
Veterans Memorial	5	4
South Camden Alternative	5	2

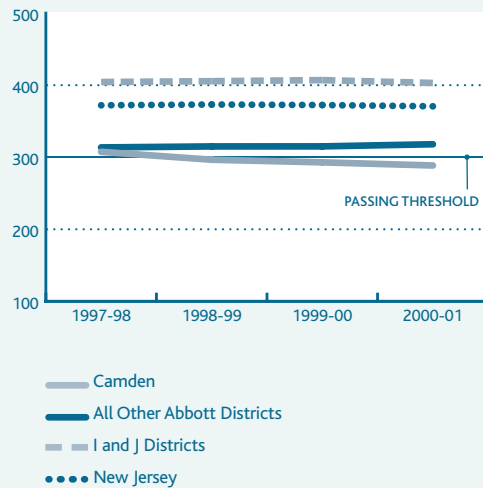
SOURCE | New Jersey Department of Education: Office of Title I Program Planning and Accountability, September 2004

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FIGURE | 3.49

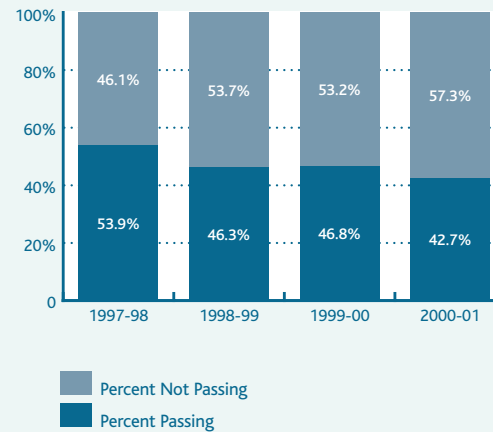
Grade 11 (HSPT) Reading Average Score by District Grouping, 1997–98 to 2000–01



SOURCE | New Jersey Department of Education: Office of Assessment and Evaluation, 1997-98 to 2000-01.

FIGURE | 3.50

Grade 11 (HSPT) Reading Proficiency: Camden, 1997–98 to 2000–01



SOURCE | New Jersey Department of Education: Office of Assessment and Evaluation, 1997-98 to 2000-01.

elementary or even middle schools. In this way, the Abbott reforms do not differ from standard educational practice across the state or indeed, nationally. As we discussed above, until recently, the Abbott remedies have provided less in the way of real instructional reforms at the middle or high school levels when compared to what has been available for younger children. We turn next to the results of the Grade 11 assessments with moderate expectations.

The 11th grade test given throughout the state changed in 2001–02 from the HSPT to the HSPA. HSPT scores ranged from 100 to 500, with 300 as the passing threshold. The HSPA ranges from 100 to 300, with 200 as the proficiency threshold, and 250 as the advanced proficiency threshold. Scores on these two tests are not comparable, so we examine them separately below.

Figure 3.49 shows that Camden's general education high school students performed below their peers in the other Abbott districts on the Grade 11 reading exam between 1997–98 and 2000–01. While reading scores

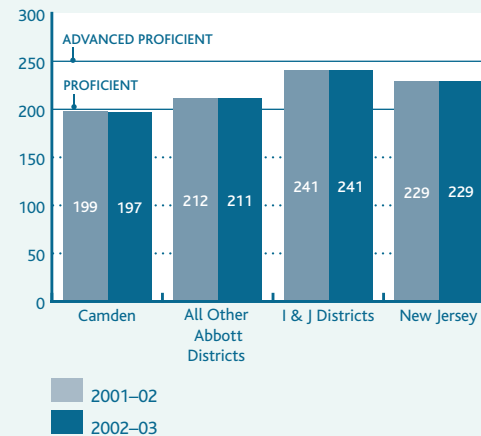
remained about the same in the other districts, Camden's scores actually dropped by about six percent. There was a gap of from 53 to 58 points between all other Abbott districts and the state throughout this time period. The I and J districts remained more than 30 points above the state average on the exam.

What trends were behind this drop in Camden's high school reading scores? Between 1997–98 and 2000–01, a decreasing percentage of Camden's 11th grade general education students passed the state's reading test (Figure 3.50). In 1997–98, 54 percent of Camden 11th grade students passed the HSPT reading exam; 43 percent passed in 2000–01.

The Grade 11 general education language arts literacy results from the last two years show that Camden's language arts literacy scores were just under the proficiency level in 2001–02 and 2002–03 (Figure 3.51). About half of Camden 11th grade general education students met the state proficiency standard in both years (Figure 3.52). Student scores in all of the other district groupings remained

FIGURE | 3.51

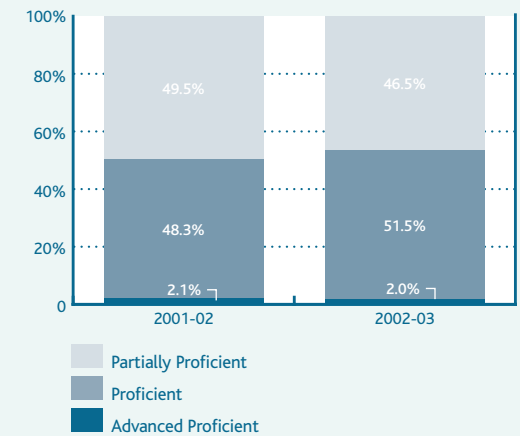
Grade 11 (HSPA) Language Arts Literacy Average Score by District Grouping 2001–02 to 2002–03



SOURCE | New Jersey Department of Education: Office of Assessment and Evaluation, 2001–02 to 2003–04; School Report Card, 2001–02 to 2002–03

FIGURE | 3.52

Grade 11 (HSPA) Language Arts Literacy Proficiency: Camden, 2001–02 to 2002–03



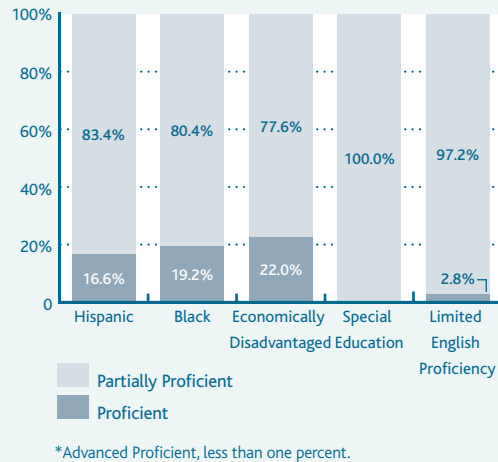
SOURCE | New Jersey Department of Education: Office of Assessment and Evaluation, 2001–02 to 2003–04; School Report Card, 2001–02 to 2002–03

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FIGURE | 3.53

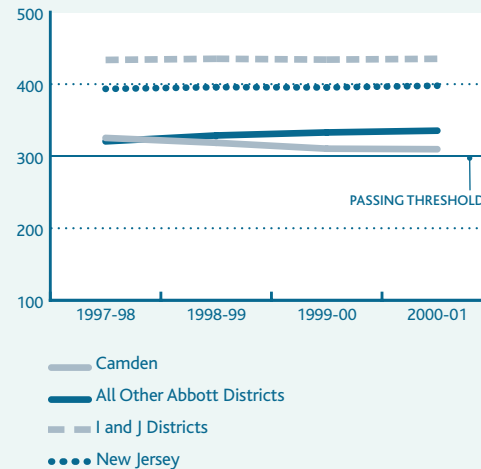
Grade 11 (HSPA) Language Arts Literacy Proficiency by Subgroup: Camden, 2002–03



SOURCE | New Jersey Department of Education: Office of Assessment and Evaluation, 2001–02 to 2003–04; School Report Card, 2001–02 to 2002–03

FIGURE | 3.54

Grade 11 (HSPT) Math Average Score by District Grouping, 1997–98 to 2000–01



SOURCE | New Jersey Department of Education: Office of Assessment and Evaluation, 1997–98 to 2000–01.

stable and above proficiency with nearly three-fourths meeting proficiency standards.

Looking more deeply at the Grade 11 language arts literacy results in 2002–03, we now examine performance by student subgroup. About one in five of Hispanic, Black, and economically disadvantaged students met proficiency levels. No students in special education programs and three percent of students with limited English proficiency scored at least proficient that year.

As with high school reading and language arts literacy scores, we did not expect to find a change in Camden's high school math scores. Similar to what we saw above, Camden's general education high school math scores dropped about five percent (Figure 3.54) between 1997–98 and 2000–01. On average, 11th graders in the other Abbott districts scored 321 in 1997–98, lower than their counterparts in Camden. By 1998–99, the other Abbott districts surpassed Camden, and improved by about four percent to 335 in 2000–01.

Figure 3.55 shows that fewer Camden 11th graders passed the Grade 11 math exam over time. In 1997–98, 63 percent of Camden’s high school juniors in general education met state standards in math, compared to 55 percent in 2000–01.

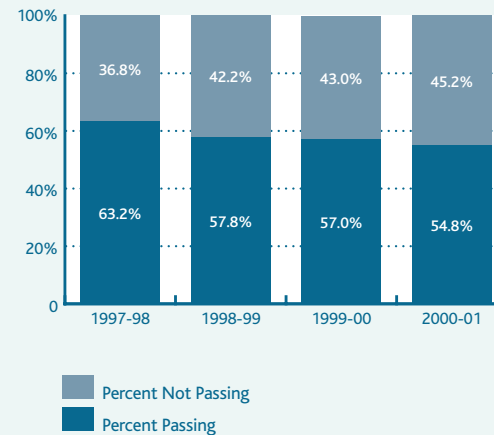
Turning to the later high school math scores for general education students in Grade 11, we see that the average score remained just below the proficiency level, with about 30 percent meeting state standards. There was also little change in any of the other district groupings shown in Figure 3.56.

There is not much difference in the subgroup population scores between the language arts literacy and math exams. One in five or fewer of the Black, Hispanic, and economically disadvantaged students scored proficient or above on the Grade 11 math exam in 2002–03, while none of the special education and limited English proficiency students met that level of achievement.

Grade 11: AYP. Three Camden high schools missed one or more Grade 11 AYP benchmarks in 2003–04. All three—Camden,

FIGURE | 3.55

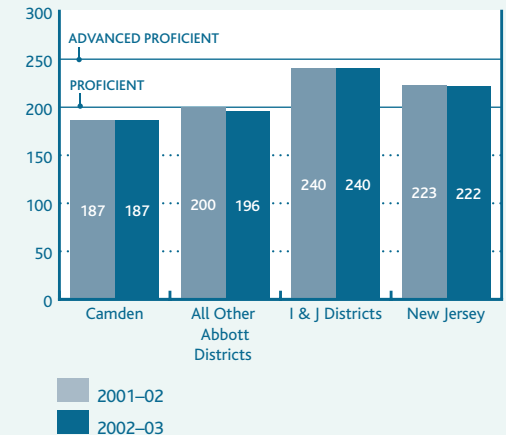
Grade 11 (HSPT) Math Proficiency: Camden, 1997–98 to 2000–01



SOURCE | New Jersey Department of Education: Office of Assessment and Evaluation, 1997-98 to 2000-01.

FIGURE | 3.56

Grade 11 (HSPA) Math Average Score by District Grouping, 2001–02 to 2002–03



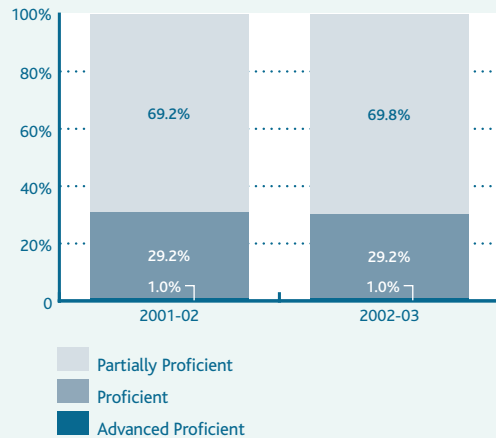
SOURCE | New Jersey Department of Education: Office of Assessment and Evaluation, 2001-02 to 2003-04; School Report Card, 2001-02 to 2002-03

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FIGURE | 3.57

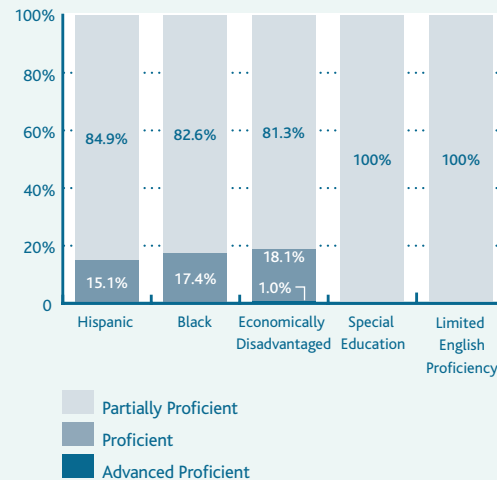
Grade 11 (HSPA) Math Proficiency: Camden,
2001–02 to 2002–03



SOURCE | New Jersey Department of Education: Office of Assessment and Evaluation, 2001-02 to 2003-04; School Report Card, 2001-02 to 2002-03

FIGURE | 3.58

Grade 11 (HSPA) Math Proficiency by Subgroup:
Camden, 2002–03



SOURCE | New Jersey Department of Education: Office of Assessment and Evaluation, 2001-02 to 2003-04; School Report Card, 2001-02 to 2002-03

Wilson, and Creative and Performing Arts High Schools—missed AYP targets for the second year in a row, placing them in the “school improvement” category under NCLB. Camden High School missed 18 AYP benchmarks and Wilson missed 16; Creative and Performing Arts High missed target levels for three AYP indicators. Under federal law, parents with children in these schools may choose to send their children to another public school in the district. There is one public high school in Camden that is not on the list of high schools not making adequate yearly progress, (Brimm Medical Arts) and two charter schools operating in the district that serve high school-age students (LEAP Academy and Camden Academy Charter High School).

General education students at Dr. Brimm Medical Arts High School outperformed both No Child Left Behind thresholds with 91 percent scoring at least proficient on the language arts exam and 58 percent in math. Creative and Performing Arts High School’s general education students exceeded the threshold in language arts with 84 percent

meeting the proficiency standard. At Camden High, however, fewer than two in five general education students scored at least proficient on the HSPA language arts. On the math test, fewer than two in five met the state standards at Creative and Performing Arts, Camden, and Woodrow Wilson High Schools.

Other testing in Camden. The district administers “Measuring Up,” a simulated state test every eight weeks leading up to the statewide assessments. The Terra Nova test is administered to students annually in the grades that are not taking the statewide tests. (Students also take a simulated Terra Nova during the year to prepare for that test.) The results of these interim tests help teachers cluster students who need extra help. Student literacy is assessed on an ongoing basis through the computer-based Compass Learning System. Every teacher completes a weekly progress report for every student that is kept in his or her respective portfolio. Teacher-made literacy tests and ready-made assessments from textbook companies are often administered for report card grades at

the end of each quarter. Diagnostic testing in reading and writing is also done at the Sylvan Learning Labs.

High School Completion

High school completion is an important event that greatly affects young people’s chances for social and economic improvement. Because of this, and because it is the culmination of a school system’s responsibilities to its community’s residents, we present graduation as a major indicator of educational success. As we have discussed above, neither Abbott nor Camden’s own reforms have truly addressed instructional programs in the high schools, so we approach these findings with moderate expectations.

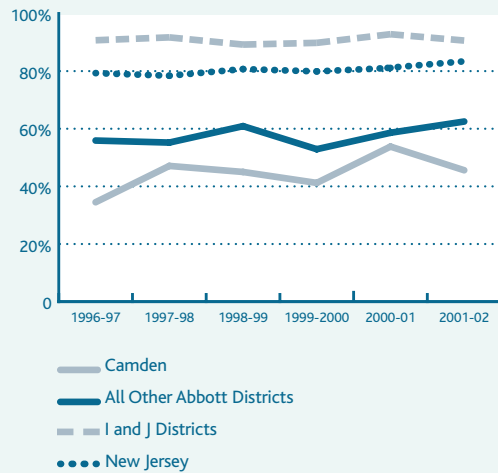
How many students who entered high school four years ago as ninth graders are graduating this year? Unfortunately, without keeping track of each student, it is impossible to answer this question.⁴¹ In fact, up until 2002–03, the New Jersey School Report Card reported the percentage of the current year’s 12th grade students who graduated.

FIGURE 3.59 Camden Schools Not Making Adequate Yearly Progress: Grade 11, 2003–04		
School	Number Standards Not Met	Years Not Making AYP
Camden	18	2
Woodrow Wilson	16	2
Creative and Performing Arts	3	2
SOURCE New Jersey Department of Education: Office of Title I Program Planning and Accountability, September 2004		

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FIGURE | 3.60

Cumulative Promotion Index by District Grouping,
1996–97 to 2001–02

SOURCE | School Report Card, 1994–95 to 2002–03

People who study high school graduation rates nationally have come up with a good way to estimate true graduation rates. They use a measure called the “Cumulative Promotion Index” or the CPI. The CPI is the percentage of 12th graders who graduate this year “adjusted” by an estimate of the school’s promotion rates that year. Like any other estimate we could use, with the existing data, the CPI does not account for the number of students who leave the district after entering high school if they moved or for reasons other than dropping out. It assumes, as do other measures that an equal number of students move into the district. We present CPI trends over time as a proxy for a true graduation rate in the absence of better quality data.

Below, we use the CPI to estimate graduation rates for Camden, all other Abbott districts, the wealthiest districts, and the state from 1996–97 to 2001–02 (Figure 3.60).⁴² Our estimates suggest that only 35 percent of the 9th graders who entered in 1992–93 graduated from Camden high schools in 1996–97. Camden graduated 54 percent of the class of 2000–01. Graduation estimates for

Camden High School, Woodrow Wilson, and Brimm Medical Arts High Schools differed widely. In all years but one, Brimm graduated about 90 percent of its students (in 1999–00, 69% graduated). About one in three Camden High School students graduated in every year. Estimated graduation rates in Woodrow Wilson High have been more unstable: for example, 30 percent graduated in 1999–00, and 67 percent graduated in the next school year.⁴³

On average, high schools across the state graduate about 80 percent of their students and the wealthiest districts have graduated about 90 percent: both rates have been steady. The other Abbott districts graduated about 56 percent in 1996–97 but that figure rose to about 62 percent in 2001–02. More needs to be done to assess the true graduation rates in New Jersey high schools.

Routes to Graduation

Next, we consider how seniors in Camden’s high schools showed their readiness to graduate. In New Jersey, students can graduate by

passing the HSPA test or the Special Review Assessment (SRA).

High school achievement tests show if students have mastered the content and skills outlined in New Jersey's Core Curriculum Content Standards. Before 2001–02, it was assumed that graduating general education students mastered the content standards and passed the traditional Grade 11 exam. Since then, New Jersey high school students who fail one or more sections of the traditional exam can still earn a standard, academic diploma if they take and pass the alternative exam (SRA).

People disagree about alternative routes to graduation like the SRA. Critics argue that students must show that they have mastered curriculum standards to graduate from high school. Supporters praise New Jersey's SRA and argue that states with a single, high-stakes graduation test have a strong incentive to push those students out of school who cannot pass the test. We believe that the people of New Jersey can do both: maintain high

New Jersey Special Review Assessment White Paper Excerpt

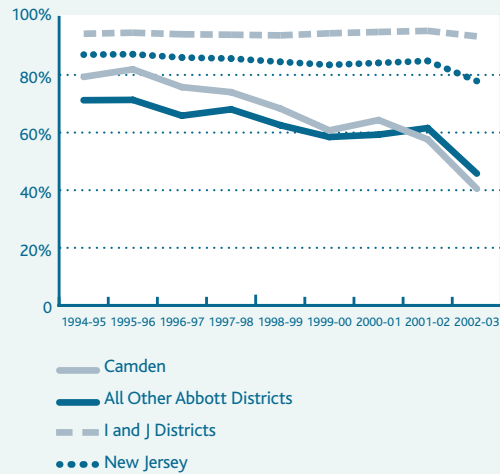
In a 2003 white paper, the New Jersey Department of Education had this to say about the SRA: The original intent of the Special Review Assessment (SRA) was to provide a way for students who met specific criteria through the Child Study Team in each district to demonstrate proficiency...Over the course of time the SRA was used for students who have limited English proficiency and many special education students. Beginning in 1991...administrative code was changed to include all students who did not pass the HSPT in the SRA program. Thus the program emphasis shifted from an alternate way for specific students to demonstrate proficiency to a program that allowed all students the opportunity. Beginning with introduction of the HSPA in 2002, all students who did not score proficient on one or more tests were included in the SRA process.... The original use [of the] SRA for special education students has been replaced by the increased use of the special education exemption process.

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FIGURE | 3.61

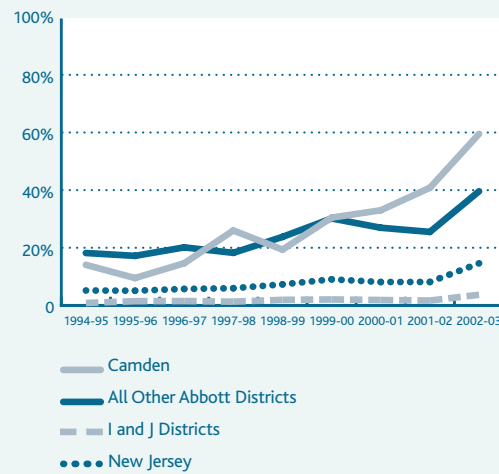
Graduation by Traditional (HSPT/HSPA) Grade 11 Exam by District Grouping, 1994–95 to 2002–03



SOURCE | School Report Card, 1994-95 to 2002-03

FIGURE | 3.62

Graduation by Alternative (SRA) Grade 11 Exam by District Grouping, 1994–95 to 2002–03



SOURCE | School Report Card, 1994-95 to 2002-03

academic standards and make sure that all students have the opportunity to earn academic diplomas.

We provide information below about how students—in Camden, the other Abbott districts, the I and J districts, and throughout New Jersey—have shown their readiness to graduate. We also examine if the changes in state policy described above had a different effect in Camden than in other districts throughout the state.

The figures below show the percentage of students graduating via the traditional and alternative exams respectively. Figure 3.61 shows, in 1994–95 through 2002–03, that the wealthiest districts consistently had the highest percentage of students graduating via the traditional test, followed by the statewide average. Camden and all other Abbott districts closely track one another. Over time, fewer students in all of the Abbott districts took the traditional route to graduation. In fact, all four district groupings show a marked drop-off after 2001–02, the year in which general education students who did not

pass one or more sections of the traditional exam (HSPA) were allowed to take and graduate from passing the alternative SRA. Less than half of the class of 2002–03 in Camden and in all Abbott districts, graduated by passing the HSPA.

Figure 3.62 is almost a mirror image of Figure 3.61, suggesting that most students who did not graduate by passing the traditional exam had indeed taken the SRA.

College Entrance Exams

Some four-year colleges stopped requiring applicants to submit Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) scores in the past few years. The organization that administers the test recently estimated that as many as 56 percent of all four-year colleges and 80 percent of the most competitive colleges in the country still require SAT scores. We examine SAT participation, below, as an indicator that Camden's high school seniors have been seriously planning to pursue a four-year college degree.

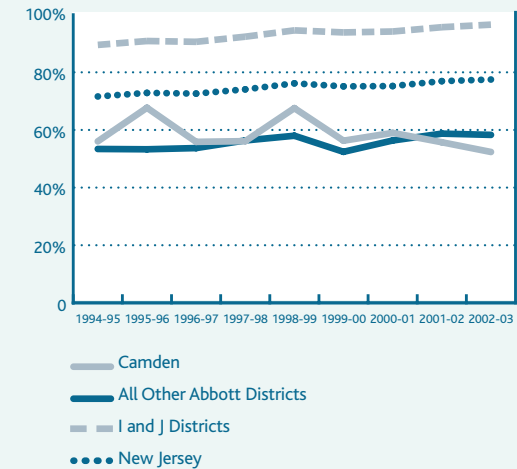
Through programs at Brimm and Wilson, many of Camden's high school students are

encouraged to pursue college and receive help with the application process (see Supplemental Programs for a description). We expected to see increased SAT participation in Camden, especially since these programs were introduced. Our findings did not meet these expectations, however. In most years, SAT participation remained between 55 and 60 percent over the time period (Figure 3.63). SAT test-taking in the other Abbott districts also remained between 55 and 60 percent for most of the time period. Almost every senior in the state's wealthiest districts took the SAT: 90 percent took the test in 1994–95 and 96 percent did so in 2002–03. The state average rose from 72 to 78 percent.

Knowing about and taking the SAT are first steps toward college entrance. To be competitive, students must also do well on the test. SAT proponents believe that it predicts success in college. The test is offered in two sections: a verbal and a math test. Scores on each SAT section range from 200 to 800. Nationally, SAT scores have risen very slightly in both the verbal and math portions of the

FIGURE 3.63

SAT Participation by District Grouping, 1994–95 to 2002–03



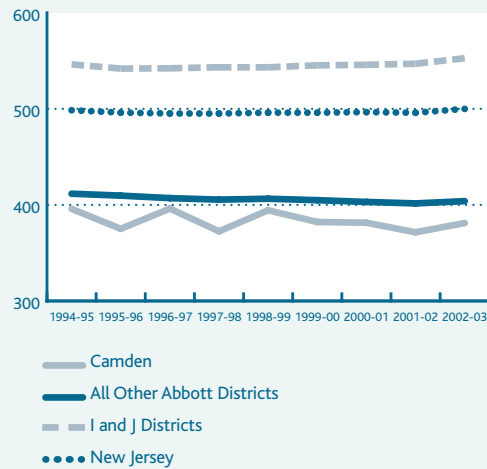
SOURCE | School Report Card, 1994-95 to 2002-03

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FIGURE | 3.64

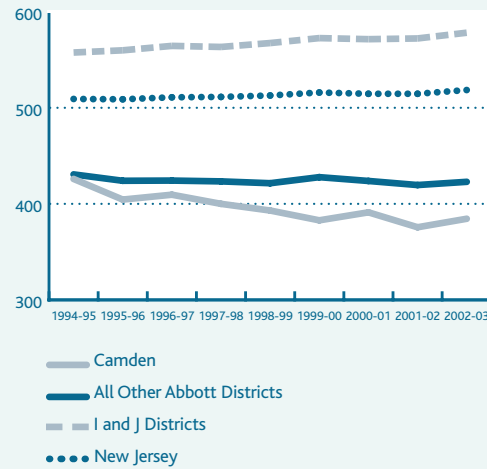
SAT Verbal Average Score by District Grouping,
1994–95 to 2002–03



SOURCE | School Report Card, 1994-95 to 2002-03

FIGURE | 3.65

SAT Math Average Score by District Grouping,
1994–95 to 2002–03



SOURCE | School Report Card, 1994-95 to 2002-03

test. Below, we show how well students—from Camden, all of the other Abbott districts, the I and J districts, and the state—have done on the verbal (Figure 3.64) and math (Figure 3.65) sections of the SAT between 1994–95 and 2002–03.

Figure 3.64 shows that average verbal SAT scores have remained about the same level between 1994–95 and 2002–03 in all of the district groupings we analyzed. On average, students in the Abbott districts scored below students throughout the state, and well below the scores achieved by their peers in the wealthiest suburbs. Camden’s verbal SAT scores were slightly lower than the scores earned in the other Abbott districts.

Students across the state scored higher on the SAT math than on the verbal (Figure 3.65). In the other Abbott districts and throughout the state, scores remained about the same between 1994–95 and 2002–03. Average math scores in Camden were lower at 426 in 1994–95 and went down to 384 in 2002–03; SAT math scores in the wealthiest suburbs increased from 558 to 578 during the same time period.

The Status of K-12 Education: A Summary

We conclude this section with an overview of key findings about Camden's standards-based reform for students in Kindergarten through Grade 12. We first describe the progress that the district has made and the challenges that still remain in each element of effective schooling. We then present a Summary Table containing findings for the subset of indicators that have specific standards or requirements under Abbott or other state or federal law.

Opportunities for Students to Learn

- Research shows that children in the early elementary grades benefit from smaller class sizes. Abbott funding has had some immediate, clear effects on conditions in the Camden schools: average class sizes are smaller than the Abbott standard in all grades. In Camden, the average elementary school class size decreased from 1994–95 to 2002–03. High school class sizes rose slightly during the same period, however.
- Camden has about 2,900 special needs students ages six to 21. Only about one in four students with disabilities goes to school in a “very inclusionary” setting where they are

educated with general education students for 80 percent or more of the school day.

- Camden's high schools offered many honors and advanced placement courses to help students become more competitive applicants and prepare them for college. We compared Camden's honors and AP course offerings to those in Cherry Hill, a nearby “I” district. Camden offers four advanced placement courses compared to Cherry Hill's 17. The district's high schools are now implementing a five-year plan to add advanced placement courses, increase enrollment in existing courses, and improve student performance on advanced placement tests.

K-12 Teacher Qualifications and Supports

- Camden faculty attendance improved between 1994–95 and 2002–03. At 95 percent in 2002–03, the faculty attendance rate was at about the same level as it was in the other Abbott districts and throughout the state.
- In 2003–04, more than four out of five Camden elementary school teachers were highly qualified in *all* of the core subjects they taught. Even so, Camden had the lowest percentage of highly qualified teachers in its elementary schools of all of the district groupings we examined.
- A large majority of Camden's high school teachers were highly qualified in 2003–04 and high school staff compared well with the other district groupings. There was a real gap between Camden and the other district groupings in the

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K-12 Education

percent of *classes* taught by highly qualified teachers, however. Slightly more than half of Camden's core high school classes were taught by highly qualified teachers, compared to 90 percent in the other Abbott districts and 95 percent across the state on average.

- In 2002–03, the district was not funding several staff positions required under Abbott. Some of these positions were filled in 2003–04, including health and social service coordinators, family liaisons, and technology coordinators. Camden schools did not employ any teacher tutors to assist children having problems with reading in either year, however.

K-12 Budget

- Property wealth is an important indicator of local capacity to support its public services including education. The wealthiest suburbs had 15 times more property wealth per student than Camden in 2003. That same year, the state average was almost ten times that of Camden.
- On a per student basis, Camden and the other Abbott districts have as much money as the successful suburban districts to support general education since Abbott parity funding began.
- In 2003–04, Camden received an additional \$1,802 per student in supplemental program aid to support the second half-day of Kindergarten and other programs and services to meet the needs of its students and their families. The district's per student supplemental programs

support decreased by about \$1,000 from the 2002–03 level, however.

K-12 Leadership

- Each Abbott district should have an "Abbott Advisory Council," a steering committee that represents the district and its community stakeholders. The primary responsibilities of the Council are to review district policies and procedures to implement the Abbott reforms. As of September 2004, Camden did not have an Abbott Advisory Council. A community reviewer of this report noted that the absence of a districtwide Council limits the district's ability to carry out its policymaking and oversight functions under Abbott.

K-12 Student Outcomes

- None of Camden's schools qualified as persistently dangerous because of the number of Category A incidents. A total of three elementary and middle schools in Camden sustained a high enough number of violent or disruptive incidents to place them in the persistently dangerous category under federal law. Camden High School was also designated persistently dangerous by this measure.
- The City of Camden compared poorly with the state on two indicators of child and youth well-being. Although there has been some improvement in teen births and child abuse and

neglect, both rates are still high at almost four times the state average. As a central public institution, schools play a critical role in ensuring the well-being of children and youth. Schools are not alone in their responsibility—parents, elected officials, and public and private agencies in the city must all play a role.

- Camden's fourth graders have made gains in language arts. Camden's general education scores rose most dramatically in 2000–01, as did the scores in many districts throughout the state, and stayed at about the same level through 2002–03. Fourth grade general education math scores improved by seven percent during the same period.
- When compared to the array of instructional programs and reforms for elementary school students, Abbott has yet to provide for students in the middle and high school grades. Overall, Grade 8 and 11 average scores have remained at or below the proficiency thresholds (except for early Grade 11 math scores, which were slightly above proficient before the introduction of a new test in 2001–02).
- At 10 percent, the district's 2002–03 elementary school suspension rate was higher than that of any other district grouping we analyzed. Elementary school suspensions increased from six percent in 1999–00. At 12 percent, Camden's 2002–03 high school suspension rate was lower than the state average (15%) and the average of the other Abbott districts (21%) and about the same as it was three years earlier.
- In New Jersey, there was no official way to estimate graduation rates until recently. In this report, we estimated historical graduation rates using a cumulative promotion index. Our estimates suggest that fewer than half of Camden's class of 2001–02 graduated from school. Although alarming, the district's promotion index improved from a low of 35 percent seven years earlier. By this measure, high schools across the state have graduated about 80 percent of their students and the wealthiest suburbs have graduated about 90 percent.
- About two out of five students in the class of 2002–03 graduated by passing the traditional Grade 11 exam, the High School Proficiency Assessment. Most of the remaining graduates that year had taken the alternative test, the Special Review Assessment.
- Participation in college entrance exams has ranged between about 55 and 65 percent over the years in Camden. Camden student performance on the verbal and math tests has remained below the state average between 1994–95 and 2002–03.

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K-12 Education

FIGURE | 3.66

Abbott K-12 Programs: Benchmark Status In Camden

Benchmark	Status
Kindergarten-Grade 3 maximum class size: 21	Met
Grades 4 and 5 maximum class size: 23	Met
Grades 6 through 12 maximum class size: 24	Met
Abbott districts have funding parity with the I and J districts	Met
Student computer ratio is 5 to 1	Met
2003-04 Grade 4 Achievement Tests*: For a school to make Adequate Yearly Progress, each of 10 demographic subgroups had to have: 1) 95% test participation; 2) 68% percent score at least proficient in language arts literacy; AND 3) 53% score at least proficient in math.	Met in: Dudley Elementary Parkside Elementary U.S. Wiggins Elementary
2003-04 Grade 8 Achievement Tests: For a school to make Adequate Yearly Progress, each of 10 demographic subgroups had to have: 1) 95% test participation; 2) 58% score at least proficient in language arts literacy; AND 3) 39% score at least proficient in math.	Not Met
2003-04 Grade 11 Achievement Tests: For a school to make Adequate Yearly Progress, each of 10 demographic subgroups had to have: 1) 95% test participation; 2) 73% score at least proficient in language arts literacy; AND 3) 55% score at least proficient in math.	Not Met

* The New Jersey Department of Education provided 2003-04 Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) data several months prior to releasing statewide 2003-04 achievement test scores. Therefore, we include the 2003-04 AYP data to provide readers with the most updated information available, while achievement test score data is only analyzed through 2002-03.

Endnotes

14. The State did not require middle and high schools to adopt Whole School Reform models, because there was not yet sufficient evidence of their effectiveness. The State did recommend the following models, however: Success For All (Preschool to Grade 8), Talent Development (Grades 6 to 8), Turning Points (Grades 6 to 8), High Schools That Work (Grades 9 to 12), and Talent Development High Schools (Grades 9 to 12). In 2004, new regulations were adopted that govern secondary school reform in the Abbott districts.

15. We describe models used in multiple Camden schools in this report. Other models can be reviewed in greater detail on the Internet. Excellent descriptions of many Whole School Reform models can be found at the Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory's Catalog of School Reform Models (<http://www.nwrel.org/scpd/catalog/index.shtml>) or the American Institutes of Research's Educators' Guide to Schoolwide Reform (http://www.aasa.org/issues_and_insights/district_organization/Reform/approach.htm).

16. Federal laws guiding the educational environment of people with disabilities include: the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (amended in 2004) 20 U.S.C. § 1400, et seq; Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act (1973) 29 U.S.C. § 794; and less directly, the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 42 U.S.C. § 2131, et seq. State regulation is New Jersey Administrative Code 6A:14, and state statute is New Jersey Statutes Annotated 18A:46.

17. BookMates is a project supported by the Jewish Community Relations Council of Southern New Jersey and the Diocese of Camden. The goal of the project is to provide weekly one-on-one tutoring to at-risk early elementary school students to promote literacy and help children become independent readers at an early age. BookMates began in January 2000.

18. The New Jersey School-Based Youth Services Program, in 45 schools statewide, helps students address problems in their lives so that they can succeed in school and gain skills for college or work. Students participate in the program by referral from school staff, representatives of the juvenile justice system, family or foster

family members, or mental health service providers. Typical school-based programs include family, substance abuse, and employment counseling; health care; pregnancy prevention; after-school tutoring and computer literacy classes for students and their families; and after-school recreation programs.

19. REBEL (Reaching Everyone By Exposing Lies) is a statewide program for high school students designed to change social norms about tobacco use. Members are involved in petition drives, public speaking engagements, and reading and mentoring in elementary schools. REBEL's advisory board, made up of teenagers from each of New Jersey's 21 counties, meets regularly to share ideas and develop statewide initiatives.

20. Achieva Study Skills (for Grades 6 through 12) and Achieva Skills and Strategies (for Grades 9–12) are two online programs designed to help students develop skills in mathematics and language arts, (specifically in reading, writing, speaking, and listening).

21. GEAR UP (Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs) is designed to increase the number of low-income students prepared to enter and succeed in colleges and universities. The program gives money to states and local organizations to provide services at high-poverty middle and high schools. A group of students enter the program in seventh grade and continue in that group through high school. GEAR UP money is also used to provide college scholarships to low-income students.

22. Federal law on "highly qualified teachers" applies to teachers in the following "core content areas:" English, reading or language arts, mathematics, science, world languages, civics and government, economics, arts (music, theatre, and art), history, and geography. New Jersey's Core Curriculum Content Standards that align with these content areas are: language arts literacy, science, mathematics, social studies, world languages, and the visual and performing arts.

Endnotes

23. In 2002–03—already many years into Abbott parity funding—47 percent of New Jersey school districts’ total revenues and 69 percent of their general education revenues were from local taxes.

24. The figures shown in the table (in thousands of dollars) are average, not total, property values per student in each district grouping because a large city with many low-value properties could have the same total property value as a smaller, wealthier suburb.

25. This and all subsequent analyses of tax rates are based on property values that have been “equalized” by the New Jersey Department of the Treasury, Division of Taxation to reflect current market values. Tax rates used throughout this section are gross figures: they do not include refunds made through the state’s rebate programs. Per student property wealth was calculated by dividing the total equalized property value by the total school enrollment in each district grouping.

26. Tax rates are expressed as a dollar amount for every \$100 of assessed property value. In a city with a tax rate of 1.00, a homeowner with a property assessed at \$100,000 would pay \$1,000 in property taxes.

27. As of school year 2004–05, Abbott Parity Aid is known as Educational Opportunity Aid (EOA) and Additional Abbott Aid is known as Discretionary Educational Opportunity Aid (DEOA).

28. We focus on general education funding as the foundation of a school district’s budget. Most school districts also receive categorical aid from the federal and/or state governments to provide supportive programs and services for students with disabilities, English language learners, and other special needs populations.

29. In Abbott districts, general education revenues support half-day Kindergarten. Although the other half-day is required under Abbott, it is considered a “Supplemental Program” and is funded by “Additional Abbott Aid,” explored separately. Preschool is funded separately by the state and is examined in Section 2.

30. The average across all other Abbott districts includes all 29 other Abbott districts, even if they did not apply for Additional Abbott Aid.

31. The newly adopted regulation guiding penalizing school employees who falsify violence and vandalism incident reports is New Jersey Administrative Code 6:16, Section 5.3.

32. School-by-school data are not included in most sections of this report because of space limitations but are available upon request.

33. Suspension rates are available for the rest of the state from 1995–96 to 2002–03. The earliest Camden suspension rates on record are for 1999–00.

34. United States Department of Education, National Center for Educational Statistics, National Assessment of Educational Progress, 1990–2003.

35. Abbott school funding is described in detail in K-12 Fiscal Resources section of this report.

36. Results are shown for special education students who took the ASK4, CEPA, and HSPA. The results for students with severe disabilities who took the alternate test are not shown.

37. Students are included in more than one category if appropriate. For example, a student may be categorized by race/ethnicity, language proficiency, special needs, and/or socioeconomic status.

38. A school-by-school listing of missed AYP benchmarks is not included in the report because of space limitations, but is available upon request.

39. United States Department of Education, National Center for Educational Statistics, National Assessment of Educational Progress, 1990–2003.

40. In 2003–04, a statewide work group met and developed recommendations for Abbott middle and high school reform. The group studied successful schools, reform models, and other improvement practices with demonstrated effectiveness at the middle and high school level. The group’s recommendations to the Commissioner of Education were adopted in Fall 2004. The regulations require all middle and high schools in Abbott districts to phase in several reforms over the next four school years. The major reforms include: 1) adoption of academic or career-focused curricular themes; 2) formation of small learning communities with

greater personalization and adult attention for each student; and 3) implementation of a rigorous, college preparatory curriculum for all students...

41. The New Jersey Department of Education also has a major project underway to develop a statewide, student-level database that will address this and many similar questions we have not been able to answer. The project, called NJSMART, was being piloted in 11 districts. If adequate funding is secured, it could be expected to “roll out” to the state level in one to two years.

42. We did not include earlier graduation estimates in Camden because they were based on only one of the three high schools.

43. School level information is not shown in this report because of space limitations but is available upon request.

Many of New Jersey's urban schools are unsafe, overcrowded, and unsuitable for helping students to achieve the Core Curriculum Content Standards. Under Abbott, the state is required to address this situation. In 2000, the legislature enacted the Abbott School Facilities Construction Program, with several key features.

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School Facilities Construction

Abbott Overview

Key features of the school facilities construction program are:

- Priority to health and safety repairs;
- Long range plans developed by districts with community partners;
- More classrooms to eliminate overcrowding;
- Space to provide preschool to all eligible three- and four-year-olds;
- 100 percent state-financed for approved costs; and
- Schools to accommodate state-of-the-art teaching and learning.

More than five years after the Abbott school facilities construction program began with the first round of long-range facilities planning, many projects are underway across the state. As this report was being prepared, Abbott districts were in a second round of facilities planning. The second round provides districts with an opportunity to build on the strengths and correct the shortcomings of their first efforts. It is another chance for districts to work with their constituents to build schools that meet the needs of children and encourage the best instructional practices.

In this section of the report, we describe the goals, scope, process, and progress of the first-round of facilities planning in Camden.

The First-Round Long-Range Facilities Plans

The Planning Process

The first step of the Abbott school facilities construction program was to develop a districtwide Long-Range Facilities Plan (LRFP). The New Jersey Department of Education issued guidelines in September 1998 to help school districts develop them. Districts' final plans were due to the state just six months later in March 1999. LRFP development involved several procedures, including:

- Projecting future enrollments;
- Determining deficiencies in every building;
- Assessing the safety and educational adequacy of current schools;
- Planning future educational needs, with a set minimum standards as a guideline;
- Engaging parents and other community members in the process; and
- Planning for "swing space" while construction is under way.

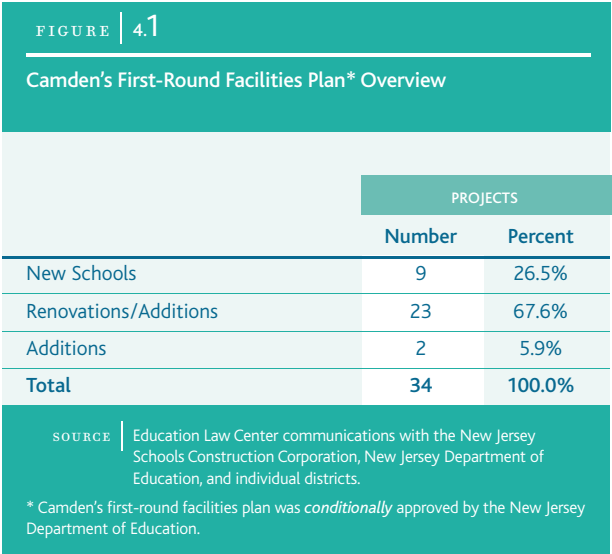
The LRFP process was a unique chance for school districts to assess their existing schools and, where needed, plan to build better ones to accommodate children’s needs and improved instructional practices. The development of the first-round LRFPs did not go very smoothly for a number of reasons. Most districts did not have enough time to assess their current educational programs. They also did not have the expertise to translate educational practices into new building designs. The New Jersey Department of Education set standards for the numbers and sizes of educational, office, and other noninstructional spaces. These “facilities efficiency standards” (FES) provided very little flexibility for districts to forward innovative designs. Indeed, they served as strict guidelines, rather than the minimum standards the Supreme Court had intended. In sum, the tight time frame, lack of expertise, and rigid standards worked together to undermine the quality of many LRFPs.

The Camden Board of Education contracted with the Vitetta Group, an architectural

firm, to help develop their LRFP. Figure 4.1 summarizes the school construction projects outlined in Camden’s first-round LRFP. Camden’s plan contained 34 projects including: nine new schools, 23 rehabilitations, and two additions.

Unlike most Abbott districts, Camden does not have a complete, approved LRFP in place. Camden’s first-round LRFP was *conditionally* approved by the New Jersey Department of Education because the district had proposed disallowed and larger spaces than allowed by the FES. When a district’s requested spaces exceed the FES, the state required the district to explain why they were needed. In many cases, the Camden Board of Education was not able to supply a justification that was acceptable to the New Jersey Department of Education. As a result, Camden has had to go through a more rigorous review process for every project it submits.

Camden’s first-round LRFP process also has been criticized in the local press by neighborhood groups and elected officials for inadequately including people beyond



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School Facilities Construction

The LRFP process was a unique chance for school districts to assess their existing schools and plan to build better ones to accommodate children's needs and improved instructional practices.

an inner circle of district and development officials. Critics say that they did not receive enough information about the LRFP when it was being developed and were not asked to provide input on the plan.

Preschool Facilities Planning

Preschool facilities should be healthy, safe, and adequate to support instruction that meets the state's early childhood *Expectations*. The Abbott school construction program is intended to improve schools housing students at all grade levels, preschool through Grade 12.

LRFP guidelines required that districts assess their preschool facilities for educational adequacy. The same assessment was not required for facilities run by Head Start and other private providers. Across the Abbott districts, 70 percent of preschoolers attend private provider programs. In Camden, 69 percent attend 24 Head Start and other private provider programs; the remaining 31 percent attend the 20 district-run programs. Regardless of the educational quality of these

programs, it is important to know if the *facilities* meet Abbott standards. Because they were not assessed in Camden, and indeed in most districts, we do not know if these buildings are adequate.⁴⁴

Under the law, other private providers are eligible to receive Abbott school construction funding *only if* they own their facilities. Without state funding, it is more difficult for providers who lease their facilities to make repairs and upgrades to meet Abbott standards or add space to accommodate additional children. In all of the Abbott districts combined, only about one-third (34%) of the other private providers own their own facilities. In Camden, 61 percent own their buildings.⁴⁵ Eligibility for funding under the law does not guarantee inclusion in the district's facilities plans, however. Camden was one of very few districts to include a few provider buildings in its LRFP. Because the district is operating with a conditionally approved LRFP, it is unclear if it still intends to upgrade private provider facilities.

Leadership

Each Abbott district was required by the New Jersey Department of Education's guidelines to assemble a facilities advisory board (FAB) to guide the development of the LRFP. The FAB was to include parents, teachers, principals, community representatives, an architect, an engineer, and a staff person from the New Jersey Department of Education. The FAB's role was to review and refine the recommendations made by an educational facilities specialist and architect and recommend the plan for adoption by the school board. The Education Law Center has recommended that FABs continue to meet until plans are fully implemented to seek input and guide the districtwide planning, design, and construction of school facilities.

District staff report that Camden had a Facilities Advisory Board (FAB) during the first phase of LRFP development. As of September 2004, it had not met in the past two years. The district told us that they planned to reestablish the committee in January 2005 for the second-round planning process. We

also learned that the district plans to initiate a separate committee for non-instructional facilities projects that are not state-funded through the Abbott program.

The Camden Redevelopment Agency (CRA) has played a central role in the planning and implementation of school construction projects. The CRA, formed in 1987 and empowered in 2002 as a result of state legislation, also exercises a great deal of control over the city's redevelopment activities in general. The CRA plans and implements projects that aim to add housing, office buildings, parks, transportation, and jobs. Several redevelopment plans are in areas where school facilities construction projects are also slated to take place.

District staff reported that the CRA meets monthly with the Camden Board of Education, the New Jersey Schools Construction Corporation, community-based organizations, and Don Todd Associates (DTA), the district's project management firm, to discuss the status of school projects. Along with district officials, the agency's executive director also

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School Facilities Construction

holds monthly meetings with representatives of the city police, fire, planning, and zoning departments to discuss proposed projects.

Progress and Challenges

Progress. The first LRFPs in the state were approved by the New Jersey Department of Education in 2000; the most pressing health and safety projects got seriously underway after Governor McGreevey created a new state agency, the New Jersey Schools Construction Corporation (SCC), to oversee the whole process in 2002.^{46,47}

For Abbott districts, LRFPs were developed and approved by their school boards, and then submitted to and approved by the New Jersey Department of Education. Once LRFPs are approved, districts prioritize projects and submit them one by one to the New Jersey Department of Education. The Department of Education checks each project for compliance with the approved LRFP and the FES, and estimates project costs. In the absence

of a fully approved LRFP, Camden's projects are treated by the state as piecemeal "amendments" to the original plan.

Once approved by the Department of Education, projects are sent to the SCC for "predevelopment." In general, a project progresses through the following stages: predevelopment, design, in bid for construction, in construction, and finally, complete. The events that occur within each of these stages are outlined in the text box on the facing page.

From the outset, all parties acknowledged that the Abbott school construction program would be a vast undertaking. As with any effort this size, it will take a long time. Many schools operate year-round and the district must have the space to provide an adequate educational program while facilities projects proceed. Even though the state finances and oversees the process, the district must take great care in pacing the submission of its

Abbott School Facilities Projects: Stages Of Progress

Predevelopment

- NJDOE reviews and approves project for educational adequacy.
- If approved by the NJDOE, SCC hires architects, engineers, and surveys property.
- When property is available at fair market value and suitable for school construction, SCC negotiates purchase and initial design documents are prepared.

In Design

- Architects develop next phase of the design documents and preliminary construction documents.
- NJDOE completes final review and approves cost.
- Architects complete design and construction documents.
- New Jersey Department of Community Affairs reviews construction documents for code compliance.

In Bid For Construction

- Documents for letting bids are approved by the SCC, the Attorney General, and the Department of Treasury.
- Construction firms begin bidding for contract.

In Construction

- Contract is awarded by SCC to one or more firms.
- "Shovels in the ground"—construction begins.
- Upon completion, New Jersey Department of Community Affairs inspects construction and issues Certificate of Occupancy.
- SCC transfers title to district.

Complete

- Staff and students occupy the building.

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School Facilities Construction

FIGURE | 4.2

Overview of Camden's Current Projects

School	Type
Creative and Performing Arts	New School
Dudley	New School
H.B. Wilson	New School
Morgan Village	New School
Washington Street	New School
R.C. Molina	New School
Cooper's Poynt	New School
Early Childhood Dev. Center	New School
Lanning Square	New School
Powell	New School
Catto	New School / Demonstration Project
Woodrow Wilson	Addition/Rehab
Camden	Addition/Rehab
Pyne Poynt	Addition/Rehab

SOURCE | Education Law Center communications with the New Jersey Schools Construction Corporation, New Jersey Department of Education, and individual districts.

projects and moving them through the pipeline to completion.

Figures 4.2 and 4.3 show that as of September 2004, 14 (41%) of Camden's 34 projects were in the pipeline toward completion: 13 (38%) were in pre-development, one (3%) in design, none were in construction, and none have been completed. Out of 532 planned projects across all Abbott districts, 105 were in predevelopment (20%), 40 in design (8%), 49 in construction (9%), and 12 completed (2%). Throughout the Abbott districts, 207 (39%) of the estimated 532 projects are in the pipeline.

Construction on the first project, the Early Childhood Development Center (ECDC) was slated to begin in 2005. In the Parkside neighborhood, the facility will have regular classrooms, specialized rooms for children with disabilities, music and art instruction rooms, a media center, and a playground. Construction on the new Wilson and Dudley schools are slated to begin in Summer 2005.

Camden was one of six districts in the state awarded a "Demonstration Project." Districts

submitted proposals to the SCC in 2003–04 to build demonstration projects, community schools coordinated with citywide redevelopment efforts. Camden's demonstration project will be a new school to replace the existing Catto Elementary School and will include a community center run by the Boys and Girls Clubs.

Challenges. There are many ways for a school construction project to get hung up on its way to completion. The New Jersey Department of Education and the district may disagree about spaces, forcing a prolonged series of negotiations. The SCC may determine, as a result of its own review, that the district should build a new school rather than renovate the existing one. The school district may have difficulty getting the land needed to build new schools. The list goes on. The Camden Board of Education has managed to move several projects into predevelopment, but has run into several problems that have stalled their progress at that stage.

One major difficulty has been finding and acquiring suitable, vacant land for

new schools. An older city, Camden's land is very developed. Because of its industrial history, many remaining vacant lots are toxic "brownfields," not suitable for school construction without prior remediation.⁴⁸ In some neighborhoods—Lanning Square, Parkside, and Cramer Hill, for example—the district ended up selecting sites that were occupied by residents and business owners. Displacement and re-location plans generated bitterness in the affected neighborhoods. Neighborhood groups were organized to express their concerns and, in some cases, oppose the CRA's other revitalization efforts. For example, a new school is planned in the Cramer Hill neighborhood, where there has been vocal and active opposition to the CRA's plans for that neighborhood.

Progress also stalls when the city sells land slated for school construction to commercial real estate developers as has happened in Camden and other Abbott districts. Municipal overburden (see the School Budget section) lies at the heart of this problem. Faced with the pressing need to pay for programs and

services to make cities run, urban leaders must look for ways to raise revenue. Although safe, educationally adequate school buildings—and well-functioning schools—are critical foundations of neighborhood development, schools do not generate property tax dollars in the short term, while new homes and businesses do. The Camden Board of Education would not publicize its site selection out of concern that developers would buy the land and drive up the cost. This secretiveness generated ill will with community members and may have actually increased the likelihood that revitalization sites would encroach on potential school sites. The Camden Board of Education has had to find new land, revise project designs, and re-estimate costs as a result of losing sites to real estate developers.

Camden's school construction progress has been slowed by lack of coordination between the district officials and the CRA on the one hand and the school board on the other. Repeated, midstream changes have been made to project designs; each time, projects had to be re-submitted to the school board

FIGURE 4.3

Status of Facilities Projects: Camden & All Other Abbott Districts*

	Camden		All Other Abbott Districts
	NUMBER	PERCENT	PERCENT
To Be Submitted to NJDOE	20	58.8%	61.3%
Pre-Development	13	38.2%	19.7%
In Design	1	2.9%	7.5%
Construction Contract Awarded	0	0.0%	9.2%
Completed	0	0.0%	2.3%
Total	34	100.0%	100.0%

SOURCE | Education Law Center communications with the New Jersey Schools Construction Corporation, New Jersey Department of Education, and individual districts.

* As of September 2004.

4

School Facilities Construction

The second round of facilities planning provides districts with an opportunity to build on the strengths and shortcomings of their first efforts.

for approval. If thorough discussions among all parties had occurred before plans were submitted for approval, projects would have progressed much more smoothly.

District staff told us that the Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction, Director of Curriculum and Instruction, and the Director of Special Services have provided information about the district's current and planned educational programs. The district's Early Childhood Education Advisory Council has been involved in the design of the new Early Childhood Development Center and provides recommendations about required preschool classroom and building specifications.

Don Todd Associates, the district's project management firm, told us that it has held several meetings throughout the community. At these meetings, Don Todd Associates presented designs to residents and invited their feedback. As of August, Don Todd Associates had convened seven community meetings in 2004. These meetings focused on the Early Childhood Development Center, Pyne Poynt,

Cooper's Poynt, R. C. Molina, Wilson, Dudley, and Lanning Square school projects.

Don Todd Associates and their colleagues should be commended for holding so many community meetings. If the new buildings are to be responsive to community needs, however, the district should get input from residential and commercial neighbors *before* projects are designed and sites selected. Generally speaking, once a design is in the works, very few significant changes can be made to accommodate anyone's concerns.

As an example, there was a communication breakdown in the neighborhood surrounding the proposed site of the new Dudley School. The new school is to be located at one of the city's busiest intersections, a potential danger to children traveling to and from school. Parents and community members have protested the site selection. If these parties had been involved in site selection from the outset, this protest probably would not have taken place.

The Status of School Facilities Construction: A Summary

We conclude this chapter with an overview of key findings about school facilities construction in Camden and describe in more detail the progress that the district has made and the challenges that still remain.

- Camden's first-round long-range plan was conditionally approved by the New Jersey Department of Education because the district proposed spaces that were not allowed under the published standards.
- As of September 2004, 14 out of Camden's 34 school construction projects are in the pipeline toward completion, none are in construction or completed.
- Camden was one of six districts in the state awarded a "Demonstration Project:" a new school to replace the existing Catto Elementary School which will include a community center run by the Boys and Girls Clubs.
- The district has been criticized for including too few community representatives too late in the game to allow meaningful input into school construction plans.
- The Camden Board of Education has had a difficult time finding and acquiring suitable sites because of land shortages, competition with private real estate development, and environmental problems.
- Progress on school construction has been hampered by a lack of coordination between district officials and the Camden Redevelopment Agency on the one hand and the school board on the other.
- Camden was one of a very few school districts to include upgrades to private preschool provider buildings in its first-round facilities plan. Because Camden's plan never received full state approval, it is unclear if the district still intends to upgrade these facilities.

4

School Facilities Construction

Endnotes

44. The New Jersey Department of Education will require districts to assess all provider buildings in the second-round LRFP process.

45. This data was collected by the New Jersey Department of Education in 2003–04, private provider budgets. This figure reflects the 36 Camden providers who responded to this specific question.

46. Abbott districts were required to address emergency school facilities defects which would directly affect the "health and safety" of children in these buildings. Health and safety projects include: roof repairs, window replacement, boiler repair, and asbestos removal.

47. The SCC is a quasi-public agency housed within the New Jersey Economic Development Authority.

48. The New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (NJDEP) works with the New Jersey Schools Construction Corporation to inspect and remediate school construction sites. NJDEP conducts title searches on the sites to determine if there is any contamination risk. Sites judged to be at risk are inspected and remediation costs estimated. (Estimated remediation costs are subtracted from land's sale price.) After remediation, NJDEP determines if the sites meet residential occupancy criteria. If the sites do not meet NJDEP approval, additional work is required to ensure that contaminated material is at a sufficient distance below the surface not to constitute a risk to students and school staff.

Abbott Indicators List

The following is the list of Abbott indicators in this technical version of the report. The indicators included in the summary report are highlighted in bold. Findings from all indicators are included wherever they were available and of sufficient quality.

The Community and Students

What conditions of living and learning in the community served by the district might affect children's and youth's readiness to learn?

- **Female-headed households with children**
- **Adult educational attainment**
- **Labor force participation**
- **Unemployment rate**
- **Median household income**
- **People living below poverty level**
- **Children living below poverty level**
- **Foreign-born population**
- **Rent-income ratio**
- **Renter-occupied housing**
- **Vacant housing**
- **Violent crimes**

What student characteristics might affect the nature and extent of services offered by the district?

- **Eligibility free-/reduced-price lunch**
- **Race/ethnicity**
- **English language learners**
- **Students with disabilities**
- **Immigrant students**
- **Homelessness**
- **Student mobility rate**

The Preschool Program

Opportunities for Students to Learn

How close is the district to achieving universal enrollment for all three- and four-year-olds?

- **Percent of preschool universe served (Census/ASSA)**
- **Total preschool population served**
- **Number of providers by type**
- **Waiting list**
- **Head Start inclusion**
- **Outreach activities**
- **Identification of unserved families**

Is the district providing a "high-quality" preschool education to all eligible children?

- **Programs for children with disabilities**
 - Preschool Child Study Team (CST)
- **Curriculum development**
 - **Curricula used**
 - People involved
 - Considerations/inputs to adoption
 - Review frequency
 - Alignment to Expectations
- **Transition activities (into preschool and Kindergarten)**
- **Health and social services**
 - Direct services offered
 - Methods for assessment
 - Referral methods
 - Transportation services
- **ECERS-R quality scores**

Teacher Qualifications and Supports

Are preschool programs adequately staffed and are staff adequately supported?

- **Number of teachers**
- **Educational attainment of preschool teachers**
- **Preschool teacher certification**
- **Preschool teacher experience**
- **Preschool teacher salary**

Abbott Indicators List

- Performance evaluation
- Professional development opportunities
 - Criteria
 - Methods
 - Joint preschool-Kindergarten professional development

Budget

Are the preschool programs adequately funded?

- Preschool revenues

Leadership

To what extent does the district's ECEAC represent its stakeholders and participate in the district's early childhood program planning and decision-making?

- Early Childhood Education Advisory Council (ECEAC)
 - Representation
 - Training
 - Frequency of meetings
 - Involvement in program planning, budgeting, and facilities planning
 - Other activities

Student Outcomes

Have preschool students developed the skills they will need to continue to learn and develop in Kindergarten?

- Assessment methods used
- PPVT-III or ELAS scores

K-12 Education**Opportunities for Students to Learn**

Do our schools provide high-quality instruction in a range of content areas adequate to ensure that students can meet content standards?

- Whole School Reform
 - Model chosen
 - Approval of model
 - Year adopted
 - Reason for adoption
 - Adoption procedures
- Class size
- Programs for children with disabilities
- Curriculum development
 - Curricula used
 - People involved
 - Considerations/inputs to adoption

- Review frequency
- Method for ensuring alignment across grade levels
- College preparatory course
 - AP courses
 - AP course eligibility
 - Availability of college preparatory sequence (math and science)

Student and Family Supports

Is the school providing programs and services to support students' well-being and academic performance in accordance with demonstrated need?

- Full day Kindergarten
 - Class size
- Early literacy
 - 90-minute reading blocks
 - Small group/one-to-one tutoring
- Health and social services
 - Referral and coordination
 - On-site services
 - Nutrition program
 - Access to technology
 - Student-computer ratio
 - Alternative education program
 - College and work transition programs

Abbott Indicators List

- After-school programs
- Summer programs
- Art and Music programs

Are strategies in place to ensure effective parent outreach and involvement?

- **Parent involvement policies and practices**

Teacher Qualifications and Supports

Are our schools adequately staffed and supported?

- Student-teacher ratio
- Faculty attendance
- **Highly qualified teachers**
- **Abbott staffing patterns**
- Professional development
 - Description of instructionally-linked, curriculum-specific training
 - Inputs to selecting professional development opportunities
- Performance evaluation criteria and methods
- Frequency of teacher networking and collaboration
- Other teacher supports

Budget

Are our schools adequately funded?

- **Property wealth**
- Local tax rates
 - Average tax rates
 - School tax rates
- **General education budget**
- **Supplemental programs budget**
- Additional Abbott Aid application process

Leadership

Do our schools and does our district have adequate and representative leadership?

- **School Leadership Councils**
 - Representation of stakeholder groups
 - Training in roles and responsibilities
 - **Frequency of meetings**
 - Involvement in planning and budgeting
 - Other activities
- **Abbott Advisory Council**
 - Representation of stakeholder groups
 - **Frequency of meetings**
 - Involvement in planning and budgeting
 - Other activities

Student Outcomes

How physically, socially, and emotionally healthy are our children?

- **Child death**
- **Teen death**
- **Teen births**
- **Substantiated abuse and neglect cases**
- **School violence and vandalism rates**
 - Are all students in Kindergarten to Grade 12 learning according to statewide standards?
- **Student attendance**
- Suspension rates
- **Grade 4 Language Arts Literacy and Math Assessments**
 - Mean scores
 - Proficiency percentages
 - AYP status
- **Grade 8 Language Arts Literacy and Math Assessments**
 - Mean scores
 - Proficiency percentages
 - AYP status
- **Grade 11 Language Arts Literacy and Math Assessments**
 - Mean scores
 - Proficiency percentages
 - AYP status
- **High and low performing schools**
- Kindergarten through grade 2
 - Early Language Assessment System scores

- Terra Nova Edition 2, where available
- **Graduation**
 - Estimated rates (cumulative promotion index)
 - Graduation via Traditional Grade 11 Exam (HSPA/HSPT)
 - Graduation via Alternative Grade 11 Exam (SRA)
- **College Entrance**
 - SAT participation
 - Verbal and math mean scores

School Facilities Construction

Healthy, Safe and Educationally Adequate Schools

What are the district's long-range facilities plans?

- **LRFP approval status**
- **Number and type of planned projects**
- **Process of development**

How much progress has been made toward completing educational facilities projects in the districts?

- **Plans to upgrade preschool facilities**
- **Status of projects (complete, construction, design, predevelopment, not yet submitted)**

- **Estimated completion dates**
- **Cooperation with municipal partners**
- **Community input**
- **Barriers to progress**

To what extent is there adequate, representative leadership that encourages meaningful public participation for school facilities planning and project implementation?

- **Facilities Advisory Board**
 - Representation of stakeholder groups
 - Frequency of meeting (beyond LRFP submission)
 - Involvement in plan development
 - Transparency to public
 - Other activities

District and Community Reviewer Letters



Camden City Public School District, 201 N. Front Street, Camden, New Jersey 08102 • 856-966-2000

ANNETTE D. KNOX
SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS

MEMORANDUM

DATE: May 4, 2005
TO: Lesley Hirsch and Erain Applewhite-Coney
Abbott Indicators Co-Directors
FROM: Annette D. Knox, Superintendent of Schools
RE: Additional Information for Camden Indicators Report

As you prepare the Camden Abbott Indicators Report for publication, I am pleased to provide you with some additional information that should be of interest to all education stakeholders in Camden and throughout New Jersey.

The report will provide all of us with an opportunity to better understand the Abbott mission and to refine our planning for long-term success. As with the other three reports, Camden's will acknowledge our many successes, while also providing an indication of the work that remains to be done.

In this memorandum, I wish to share some additional, current information to help readers of the report gain an even fuller appreciation of the work we are doing in several key areas:

Student Achievement - Camden students have shown marked improvement in state assessments since the onset of Abbott reforms. Like most urban Abbott districts, we are currently seeing the greatest gains in the Grade 4 assessments, since these are the only students who have enjoyed the benefits of quality preschool programs and smaller classes for their entire academic experience.

- In 2003-2004, the number of fourth graders scoring proficient in language arts rose to 63% -- an increase of almost 10% over the previous year.
- In 2003-2004, the number of fourth graders scoring proficient in math was 54% -- an increase of 6% over the previous year.

Highly Qualified Staff - Almost nine in 10 of Camden's high school teachers -- 87% -- are highly qualified in all subjects, exceeding the Abbott average of 86%. At the elementary level, more than four in five (82%) of teachers are highly qualified in all subjects. As in other districts, many of Camden's middle school special needs teachers, who teach multiple subjects, are still working toward attaining Highly Qualified status in some areas. With one in five students enrolled in special education programs, we have a high number of staff in that category. I'm also pleased to report that the district has approved a portfolio assessment option for paraprofessionals, and is providing them with 20 hours of transportation for others to take the Praxis exam in locations outside Camden.

School Security - Camden Public Schools are much safer than public perception may indicate. With its successful emphasis on accountability, communication, and training, a firm seeking to provide school security in Washington, D.C. is modeling our security program. Our security officers have a state-of-the-art radio system, and receive extensive professional development throughout the year.



May 4, 2005 - Additional Information for Camden Indicators Report
Page 2

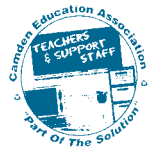
School-Based Youth Services (SBYS) - We are enormously proud of this program. Both comprehensive high schools and our five middle schools have a team of professionals -- a crisis counselor, an outreach specialist, a family therapist, a nurse-practitioner, and a health and human services coordinator -- to assist students and their families. We are focused on family intervention and empowerment, which is vitally important in a city with high unemployment, a high crime rate, and six out of 10 homes headed by single women. In addition to counseling, we provide students with job placement and a large number of activities that are aimed at keeping them positively occupied outside of school. Two programs are worth mentioning in detail:

- A new curriculum, titled "Get Real About Violence," is about to be launched in all grades. Training in the program has already been provided to one teacher in each school, as well as the SBYS team members noted above. This program, based on solid research and woven into the curriculum, combines a focus on character development, respect and empathy for others, and non-violent problem solving with after-school programs and parent involvement. We are very excited about its potential.
- Our "Partners in Parenting" program, now in its eighth year, provides comprehensive support for pregnant students and those already with children. It offers parenting skills, along with a focus on developing a life plan for young parents, including the importance of effective co-parenting for mothers and fathers, regardless of their relationship. We also operate two Parent-Child centers, where students with young children can continue their education while receiving excellent childcare from trained community members. The staff ratio is 1:3 for infants, and 1:4 for toddlers.

Like all urban districts, Camden faces severe challenges. And, while we take satisfaction in the many successes we have enjoyed, we acknowledge and accept that there is still much work to be done. Ours is a community with enormous untapped human potential, and the public schools have a central role to play in developing that potential in our children and their families. Of course, we cannot do it alone, but we are determined to do our part, and to make the Camden Public Schools a leading force in the revitalization of this long-neglected city.

We appreciate the information provided by the Abbott Indicators Report. It will be an important element in the roadmap for future improvements, to which we are all committed.

District and Community Reviewer Letters



Camden Education Association

Claraliene Gordon, President

840 Cooper Street • Suite 575 • Camden, New Jersey 08102
Phone (856) 963-0440 • Fax (856) 541-0437 • E-Mail www.Camdeneca.org

May 5, 2005

Mr. David Sciarra
Executive Director
Education Law Center
60 Park Place, Suite 300
Newark, NJ 07102

Dear Mr. Sciarra,

On behalf of the Camden Education Association, representing more than 3,000 teachers, support professionals, and security officers working in the Camden Public Schools, I am pleased to offer some additional comments for inclusion in the 2005 Abbott Indicators Report for Camden.

Other than parents and caregivers, CEA members may have the closest relationship of anyone in our students' lives. We are their teachers and support professionals, but we are so much more; we are also the familiar faces who support them as they grapple with the reality of growing up in the poorest city in the United States of America. To people outside Camden, the statistics are simply numbers. But for our students, who live in neighborhoods crippled by a 16 percent unemployment rate, decades of neglect, and rampant crime, poverty, and violence, the public schools serve as a reliable haven in a sea of insecurity.

We know we provide our students with physical, emotional, social, and academic guidance when they have nowhere else to turn.

The Abbott Indicators Report is important snapshots of how far the Camden Public Schools have come – and how far they have to go. Since it relies on data that is a year old, we are encouraged to recognize that even more progress has been reported since that data was tabulated.

For example, the process of establishing a network of Parent Community Coordinators has advanced enormously since last year, when your data showed only 14 coordinators at our 33 schools. We now have 31 of them on board, ready to conduct community outreach and gather community feedback, both so essential to the success of urban districts under the Abbott reforms.

Research clearly indicates that family/parental involvement – particularly in urban districts – is vital to improving student achievement. These coordinators will play a central role in helping us to reach out to a widening circle of families and caregivers.

I am also pleased to serve as one of 15 members of the District Abbott Advisory Council, charged with providing oversight and advice in key areas of policy development and Abbott implementation procedures, to ensure full compliance with Abbott regulations governing School Leadership Councils in the district. The CEA takes this responsibility very seriously, and welcomes the accountability that comes with it.

*Abbott Indicators Letter to David Sciarra/Page 2
May 5, 2005*

Much media attention has been paid of late to the issue of school safety in Camden. While we must openly acknowledge the fact that this community suffers from an unacceptable epidemic of poverty and violence – which inevitably washes into our school buildings – an honest appraisal must conclude that there has been precious little coverage or acknowledgement of the many positive steps this district has taken to secure our schools, and to guide students toward better behavior.

Again, CEA members are at the center of this effort. Approximately 125 of them are school security officers, reporting to Chief of School Security James Thornton. Thanks to his leadership and the enthusiastic participation of CEA members, Camden has gained a well-deserved reputation for state-of-the-art school security programs.

Central to that effort is a comprehensive and continuing program of professional development. Throughout the year, including during the last week of June (after students have left for the summer), security officers receive training in everything from CPR and gang vernacular to passive restraint and cultural diversity. The latter is critically important in Camden, where all too often, neighborhood conflicts between students of different cultural backgrounds find their way into the schools. The CEA also agreed to negotiate an earlier arrival time for security officers, in order for them to conduct “roll call” to ensure an orderly start to the day.

It may be a cliché, but it truly does take an entire village to educate children, and nowhere is that more true than in Camden, where the needs of our students are so great and the disadvantages they experience so obvious.

The Abbott reforms – and the resources they bring – are as vital to the future of Camden as the oxygen we breathe. We will always be able to identify shortcomings and areas in need of improvement. No human endeavor is ever perfect, and urban education in a city like Camden is certainly no exception. Our role as educational professionals is to stay the course, while continuing to address areas that require our full effort and attention.

But we are making progress – steady, encouraging progress – toward our goals. Test scores are rising. Dropout rates are declining. Families are becoming increasingly involved in the schools. More and more of our three- and four-year-olds are attending quality preschool programs, one of the most important contributors to later academic success. And our schools are getting safer, despite the media's willingness report on isolated events as if they were the norm.

The journey here is far from over. But let there be no mistake that it is well underway and that there can be no turning back for this city or its students.

Rest assured that the 3,000 members of the Camden Education Association will continue to be active, enthusiastic, and supportive participants in the struggle to achieve educational equity in this city. We are committed to working with all education stakeholders in the community toward that worthy goal.

Sincerely yours,

Claraliene Gordon, President
Camden Education Association

District and Community Reviewer Letters

Jose E. Delgado, Jr
503 North 36th Street
Camden, NJ 08110

March 22, 2005

Camden Abbott Indicators Project
Education Law Center
60 Park Place, Suite 30
Newark, NJ 07102

Dear Erain & Lesley,

I want to thank both of you, the Education Law Center, committee members and all others responsible for the publication of this report. This type of independent and objective analysis of how well a school district is fulfilling its responsibilities to the children and taxpayers is critical to the planning process.

As you both know, I have a deep personal commitment to public education overall and to the Camden schools in particular. My many years on the board of education (BOE) give me insights about how school systems react to educational research and governmental mandates. I agree with the content of the report. However, I am concerned that some issues were either not included or not expressed strongly enough. I am therefore asking that you consider placing this correspondence in the published version of the report.

The Indicators Project attempts to analyze the impact that the New Jersey Department of Education's (NJDOE) Abbott Regulations had on the district's efforts to provide a "thorough and efficient" education. It is thus important that we keep in mind that the Abbott Regulations were written to "ensure that public school children . . . receive the educational entitlements guaranteed them by the New Jersey Constitution." We are clearly dealing with a very important and sober topic - the rights of tens of thousands of children and their future. My comments attempt to speak on behalf of the children and their parents.

My overriding concern is that the Camden School district did not carry out the lion's share of the Abbott Regulations. The most obvious exception being those sections related to Early Childhood Education mandates, which were carried out fully. It is therefore difficult to fully determine the actual impact that the regulations had, or could have had, on district operations and educational outcomes. Nevertheless, it is safe to say

that current test data and other information suggest that the district failed to make acceptable degrees of progress.

The record will show that the district failed to establish a district-wide Abbott Advisory Council. This advisory group's regulatory charge was to review "district policies and procedures to implement Abbott reforms, programs, and services" and to submit them for BOE approval. This group was also charged with developing "guidelines for School Leadership Committee membership, selection, training and operation consistent with" regulations. The group was expected to review the district's "three-year operational plan and budget," and conduct a district wide assessment of the status of "efforts to improve teaching and learning." Contrary to regulatory language the Superintendent never established the Abbott Advisory Council and, obviously, it was not submitted for BOE approval.

The failure to comply with just this one mandate made it impossible for the district to comply with other sections of the regulations. One major implication was that the BOE was unable to discharge its policy making and oversight function. To my knowledge the BOE neither reviewed nor discussed the regulations. Therefore, the knowledge that individual members may have had of the regulations was, at best, incomplete. My attempts to have the BOE discuss or to focus on the regulations met with no success. As a result, the BOE failed to "address student, staff and school needs through full, effective, and timely implementation of reforms, programs and services mandated and authorized in the Abbott decisions . . ." [6A:10A-5.1(a)]

One consequence of the failure to carry out the regulations was illustrated when several parents complained at a BOE meeting that principals had barred them from serving on their respective SLC. The parents reported that principals told them that the SLC's parent "quota" had been met. A central office administrator admitted that he had sent a memo "suggesting" a limit of three parents per 500-students. The ensuing discussion revealed that regulatory language related to the formation, membership and operation of the SLCs was ignored.

It is my contention that the district's administration either knowingly ignored, did not read, or did not comprehend, the regulations. I am not talking about mere technical violations that were eventually corrected. I am referring to the almost complete disregard of the regulations. The failure to use millions of tax dollars in the manner prescribed by regulation borders on professional malfeasance.

As usual, the students are the ones left holding the bag. It seems that court decisions and state regulations cannot protect them from adults that, for a whole host of reasons, fail to meet minimum professional standards of conduct and performance.

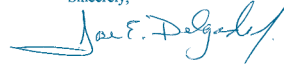
Finally, the results of this Indicators Report have the potential of providing the

District and Community Reviewer Letters

community with a tool useful to improve education in the city and too more effectively use tax-dollars. This letter is meant to ensure that all interested parties are aware of how the actions, or inaction, of a few individuals may have skewed the results herein. This awareness will in turn enable us to build prudent and active defenses that will protect the children's rights and opportunities. The best way to ensure full implementation of Abbott Regulations is to recognize past mistakes and oversights. Each of us must respect the critical role that each of us must play in the campaign to rid our city of an under producing school system

Thank you.

Sincerely,



List of Abbott Districts

Asbury Park, Monmouth County
 Bridgeton, Cumberland County
 Burlington City, Burlington County
 Camden, Camden County
 East Orange, Essex County
 Elizabeth, Union County
 Garfield, Bergen County
 Gloucester City, Camden County
 Harrison, Hudson County
 Hoboken, Hudson County
 Irvington, Essex County
 Jersey City, Hudson County
 Keansburg, Monmouth County
 Long Branch, Monmouth County
 Millville, Cumberland County
 Neptune Township, Monmouth County
 New Brunswick, Middlesex County
 Newark, Essex County
 Orange, Essex County
 Passaic, Passaic County

Paterson, Passaic County
 Pemberton Township, Burlington County
 Perth Amboy, Middlesex County
 Phillipsburg, Warren County
 Plainfield, Union County
 Pleasantville, Atlantic County
 Salem, Salem County*
 Trenton, Mercer County
 Union City, Hudson County
 Vineland, Cumberland
 West New York, Hudson County

* Salem became an Abbott district
 in 2004. It was not included among
 the Abbott districts in the analyses
 that appear throughout this report.

Project staff collected all indicators data from interviews and secondary data sources. Information sources are identified throughout the report. For interviews, we identify on what type of report our evidence relies: for example, district staff, school staff, or community members. We briefly identify data sources with all tables and charts; another Appendix contains a detailed treatment of data sources and definitions of terms used in the tables and charts.

Interviews. We conducted semi-structured interviews with district and school staff in each of the four pilot districts. In each district, we interviewed the district administrator who oversees curriculum and instruction, business administration, early childhood education, school facilities construction, and—in all but one district—the Superintendent. We also selected a sample of schools in each district representing a range of neighborhoods, grade levels, and academic performance. We visited each school and interviewed the principal and chairperson of the school’s leadership team.

Indicators staff took longhand notes during unrecorded interviews, which lasted from 30 minutes (the shortest interview was with the business administrator) to over two hours. We summarized the notes, then organized the summaries by indicator then analyzed them for emerging patterns. Analysis summaries appear throughout the report in narrative form.

Secondary data. We collected a great deal of information presented in this report in electronic and written (paper) formats from various offices in the New Jersey Department of Education, other state agencies, and from the school districts themselves.

Project staff validated and cleaned electronic data before performing analyses. Procedures were used to check and fix missing data, impossible and outlier values, and inappropriate cases.

Data received in paper form were entered in spreadsheets and converted to tables or graphs. Electronic data were analyzed using a statistical software application, and results presented in tables and graphs throughout

Data Validation Procedures: An Example

Our procedures for cleaning the data containing achievement test proficiency rates provide a useful example:

Missing data. The percent of students in any given school who scored in the three proficiency categories should always sum to 100 percent. Because schools are grouped into categories before averaging, it is important that all values—including zeros—be accurately reflected. All appropriate missing values were recoded to zeros.

Inappropriate cases. We also checked the number of students who were tested in each year, grade level, and subgroup against the appropriate enrollment. All cases that had test enrollments exceeding the number enrolled by more than 20 percent were eliminated from the analyses. This method also ensured that we did not include schools that did not enroll students in the appropriate grade.

Data Collection and Analysis

the report. Most findings are the result of straightforward descriptive statistics, such as frequency distributions or averages, and are self-explanatory.

Our sources included school- and district-level databases only. To approximate student level findings (e.g., all of the student outcomes and per student revenues), we statistically weighted our data. A simple average across districts would have yielded incorrect results because districts vary in size. For example, an average test score across all of the Abbott districts should not give equal weight to Newark, the district with the largest enrollment, and Burlington City, the Abbott district with the smallest enrollment. Test scores were weighted with test enrollment wherever available. All other student-level findings were weighted using enrollment figures appropriate to the year, grade level, and/or demographic group.

1. The Community and Students

Figure 1.1 Conditions of Living and Learning in Camden

Female head of household families. The percent of families led by a female head of household with her own children and no spouse.

Highest educational attainment. The percent of adults ages 25 and over by the highest level of school completed.

Labor force participation. The number of nonmilitary people in the labor force as a percent of civilian population ages 16 and over.

Unemployment rate. The number of people ages 16 and over without a job and looking for work, as a percent of the civilian labor force.

Median household income. The income level that divides the household income distribution into two equal parts.

Population below poverty level. The percent of people who earn below the poverty-level income threshold for a family of a specific size and ages of family members.

Population 17 and under below poverty level. The percent of children under age 18 whose family's income is below the poverty-level threshold for a family of that size and ages of the family members.

Rent-income ratio. Gross rent as a percent of household income.

Renter-occupied housing. The percent of occupied housing units that are not owner-occupied.

Violent crime. The rate per 1,000 people who have been arrested for one of the following crimes: murder, rape, robbery, aggravated assault, burglary, larceny-theft, or motor vehicle theft.

SOURCE: Violent crime is from the Uniform Crime Report, 2002. All other measures are from the 2000 Decennial Census Summary File 3.

Figure 1.2 Characteristics of Students in Camden

Eligible for free-/reduced-price lunch.

The percent of students whose families fall within 185 percent of the poverty level who are eligible for free-or reduced-price lunch during the school day under the National School Lunch Program.

Limited English Proficiency (LEP). The percent of students whose native language is not English and who have difficulty speaking, reading, writing, or understanding the English language as determined through a language proficiency test.

Students with disabilities. The percent of students with an individualized education program (IEP), regardless of placement and program involvement. An IEP contains special instructional activities to meet the goals and objectives of the student.

Data Sources and Definitions

Immigrant. The percent of students who were not born in any state and have not attended school in any state for more than three full academic years, as defined in Title I of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001.

Homeless. As defined in the McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Assistance Improvements Act of 2001, the percent of students without a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence.

Student mobility. The percent of students who entered or left school during the school year.

SOURCE: Free- and reduced-price lunch eligibility and race/ethnicity from the New Jersey Department of Education Fall Survey, 2003–04; Limited English Proficiency, disabilities, and mobility from the New Jersey School Report Card, 2002–03; Immigrant and homeless status from the Camden Public Schools, 2003–04.

2. The Preschool Program

Figure 2.1 Preschool Enrollment

SOURCE: New Jersey Department of Education, Office of Early Childhood Education, 2003 District and Provider budgets; New Jersey Department of Education, Office of School Funding, Preschool & Kindergarten Early Childhood Program Aid Enrollments, 1999–2004.

Figure 2.2 Preschool Population Served

Eligible preschool population. The number of eligible three- and four-year olds is estimated by the New Jersey Department of Education by doubling the number of students enrolled in the previous year in Grade 1 in a school district's public, charter, and nonpublic schools.

SOURCE: New Jersey Department of Education, Office of Early Childhood Education, 2003 District and Provider budgets; New Jersey Department of Education, Office of School Funding, Preschool & Kindergarten Early Childhood Program Aid Enrollments, 1999–2004.

Figure 2.3 Preschool Enrollment by Provider Type

In-district preschool. A preschool program housed in school district buildings.

Enhanced Head Start. The program under which existing Head Start seats are upgraded to meet Abbott standards funded with both state and federal money.

Expanded Head Start. The program serving children in Abbott districts that were not previously enrolled in Federal Head Start, funded entirely with state money.

Other private providers. Preschool programs run by private organizations (other than Head Start) under contract to the school district.

SOURCE: New Jersey Department of Education, Office of Early Childhood Education, 2003 District and Provider budgets; New Jersey Department of Education, Office of School Funding, Preschool & Kindergarten Early Childhood Program Aid Enrollments, 1999–2004.

Figures 2.4 and 2.5 Educational Environment of Preschoolers with Disabilities

Educational environment is determined by the level of inclusion in general education classrooms. The following are the settings where preschoolers with disabilities may be educated:

General education. An early childhood setting in a public preschool or Kindergarten, nonpublic nursery school, day care, or pre-school with collaborative preschool services. This environment, which includes the general population of students, is regarded as the least restrictive environment under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act of 2004.

Special education. An early childhood setting with special education classes in buildings with general education students.

General/special education. Special education and related services are provided in both general education and special education settings.

Home. Special education and related services are provided at home.

Itinerant services. Students are “pulled out” of class to receive special education and related services for no more than three hours a week in a setting other than home.

Separate schools. Buildings without general education grades in private schools, educational services commissions, regional day schools, jointure commissions, or special services school districts.

Residential schools. A separate school in which students with disabilities live and for which the district pays both day and residential costs.

SOURCE: New Jersey Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs, Number of Public Students with Disabilities Ages 3–5 by Placement in Districts and Charter Schools, 2003–04.

Figure 2.6 Preschool Teachers by Provider Type

SOURCE: Camden Board of Education, Early Childhood Department, 2004–05

Figure 2.7 Preschool Teacher Educational Attainment

SOURCE: Camden Board of Education, Early Childhood Department, 2004–05

Figure 2.8 Preschool Teacher Certification by Provider Type

Preschool to Grade 3 (P-3). A teaching credential required for any new preschool teacher in an Abbott district in either a district program or a community provider setting. With some exceptions, existing teachers must make progress toward attaining the P-3 endorsement by 2005.

Certification of Eligibility (CE). A provisional credential with lifetime validity issued to individuals who have the completed the

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required degree, academic study, and applicable test requirements for certification. A CE permits individuals to seek and accept employment in a preschool program until they complete the additional requirements for the P-3 certificate.

Certification of Eligibility with Advanced Standing (CEAS). A provisional credential with lifetime validity issued to individuals who have completed the CE requirements plus traditional professional preparation programs. A CEAS permits individuals to seek and accept employment in a preschool program until they complete the additional requirements for the P-3 certificate.

Nursery or Elementary (N-8). Teachers who have a nursery school or K-8 certificate and have two years teaching experience in an early childhood setting are also certified to teach in a preschool setting through a “grandfather clause” in the regulations.

SOURCE: Camden Board of Education, Early Childhood Department, 2004–05

Figure 2.9 Average Preschool Teacher Years as a Lead Teacher by Provider Type

Average years as a lead teacher. The average number of years a teacher has been qualified to direct the classroom.

SOURCE: Camden Board of Education, Early Childhood Department, 2004–05

Figure 2.10 Average Preschool Teacher Salary by Provider Type

Average preschool teacher salary. The total of preschool teacher salaries divided by the number of preschool teachers in each category.

SOURCE: Camden Board of Education, Early Childhood Department, 2004–05

Figure 2.11 Per Student Preschool Aid by Source

Early Childhood Program Aid (ECPA). A state aid program for preschool in districts with high concentrations of low-income students including the Abbott districts and 102 other districts. Reported are the sum of ECPA funds over the total number of students enrolled in any given district grouping.

Preschool Expansion Aid (PSEA). A state aid program for preschool programs in Abbott districts to help cover costs associated with increased enrollment. Reported are the sum of PSEA funds over the total number of students enrolled in any given district grouping.

SOURCE: New Jersey Department of Education, Division of Finance, Office of School Funding, Advertised District Revenues, 2002–03 and 2003–04.

Figure 2.12 Per Student Preschool Aid

Per student preschool aid. The total state aid received for early childhood programs divided by the actual preschool enrollment.

SOURCE: New Jersey Department of Education, Division of Finance, Office of School Funding, Advertised District Revenues, 2002–03 and 2003–04.

3. K-12 Education**Figure 3.1 Camden Schools, Grade Structure, and Enrollment**

SOURCE: New Jersey Department of Education, Fall Survey, 2003–04.

Figure 3.2 Average Class Size by Grade**Figure 3.3 Elementary School Average Class Size by District Grouping****Figure 3.5 Secondary School Average Class Size by District Grouping****Figure 3.8 Kindergarten Average Class Size by District Grouping**

Average class size. For the elementary grades, average class size is the number of students assigned to regular homerooms over the total number of homerooms. For the high schools, the average is calculated by the number of students assigned to an English class divided by the total number of English classes.

SOURCE: New Jersey Department of Education, School Report Card, 1994–95 to 2002–03.

Figure 3.4 Elementary School Enrollment**Figure 3.6 High School Enrollment**

SOURCE: New Jersey Department of Education, School Report Card, 1994–95 to 2002–03.

Figure 3.9 Cumulative Percent Change in Kindergarten Enrollment by District Grouping

SOURCE: New Jersey Department of Education, School Report Card, 1999–00 to 2002–03; New Jersey Department of Education, Fall Survey, 2003–04.

Figure 3.7 Educational Environment of Students with Disabilities Ages 6 to 21

Educational environment. The level of inclusion in general education classrooms:

- 1) 80% or more inclusion: students with disabilities spend 80 percent or more of their school day in a general education classroom;
- 2) 40–79% inclusion: students with disabilities attend general education classrooms between 40 and 79 percent of the school day; and
- 3) Less than 40% inclusion: students with disabilities spend less than 40 percent of the school day in a general education classroom.

SOURCE: New Jersey Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs, Number of Public Students with Disabilities Ages 6–21 by Placement in Districts and Charter Schools, 2003–04.

Data Sources and Definitions

Figure 3.10 Student-Computer Ratio by District Grouping

Student-computer ratio. The total number of students divided by the number of multi-media-capable computers that are accessible to students for instruction.

SOURCE: New Jersey Department of Education, School Report Card, 1994–95 to 2001–02; 2002–03.

Figure 3.11 Student-Teacher Ratio by District Grouping

Student-teacher ratio. The number of students divided by the combined full-time equivalents of classroom teachers and support services staff (e.g. guidance counselors, librarians, etc).

SOURCE: New Jersey Department of Education, School Report Card, 1994–95 to 2002–03.

Figure 3.12 Faculty Attendance by District Grouping

Faculty attendance. The average daily attendance of the faculty (teachers and support services staff) of the school. Attendance is the total number days faculty is present divided by the total number of contracted days excluding approved professional days, personal days, and extended leaves.

SOURCE: New Jersey Department of Education, School Report Card, 1994–95 to 2002–03.

Figure 3.13 Highly Qualified Teachers by District Grouping: Elementary Schools

Figure 3.14 Highly Qualified Teachers by District Grouping: High Schools

Highly qualified teachers. The percent of teachers that have obtained full State certification or passed the State teacher licensing examination, and hold a license to teach. New teachers must hold at least a bachelor's degree and have demonstrated, by passing a State test, subject knowledge and teaching skills

in the core content areas: English, reading or language arts, mathematics, science, world languages, civics and government, economics, arts (music, theatre, and art), history, and geography.

SOURCE: New Jersey Department of Education, Highly Qualified Teacher Survey, 2003–04.

Figure 3.15 Percent of Schools with Abbott Required Staff Positions: Camden and All Other Abbott Districts, 2002–03 and 2003–04

Instructional facilitator. Staff member required in schools serving students in Kindergarten through Grade 6 to assist in the implementation of Whole School Reform.

Teacher tutor. Staff member required in schools serving students in Grades 1 through 6 to provide one-to-one or small-group tutoring to students reading below grade level.

Social worker. Required staff member of the Family Support Team in schools serving students in Kindergarten through Grade 6.

Data Sources and Definitions

Attendance/dropout prevention officer. Required staff member in schools serving students in Grades 6 through 12 to assist students at risk of dropout.

Health-social service coordinator. Required staff member responsible for the coordination of and referral of students for health and social services in schools serving students in Grades 6 through 12.

Family liaison (parent-community coordinator). Required staff member in all schools to coordinate family education and encourage the involvement of parents in the daily school activities and decision-making. The family liaison is also a member of the Family Support team.

Nurse/health specialist. Staff member required in all schools as a member of the Family Support Team.

Guidance counselor. Staff member required in all schools as a member of the Family Support Team.

Technology coordinator. Required staff member in all schools to assist in the implementation of educational technology throughout schools.

Librarian/media specialist. Required staff member in all schools to ensure that classrooms and libraries have appropriate materials to assist students in mastering the curriculum.

Security officer. Required staff member in all schools as needed to provide school security and address student disruptions and violence.

SOURCE: New Jersey Department of Education, Office of Fiscal Policy and Planning, DOENET Abbott School-Based Budget Staffing Tables, 2002-03 and 2003-04; Camden Board of Education, 2003-04.

Figure 3.16 Average Property Value per Student

Figure 3.17 Average Equalized Tax Rate

Figure 3.20 Average School Tax Rate

Average property value per student. The equalized, assessed value of property within

a district divided by the total resident enrollment.

Average tax rates. The local property taxes levied expressed as a dollar amount for every \$100 of equalized, assessed property value.

Average equalized school tax rates. The portion of local tax revenues used to support public education expressed as a dollar amount for \$100 of equalized, assessed property value.

SOURCE: New Jersey Department of Community Affairs, Division of Local Government Services, 1998-2003.

Figure 3.18 General Education Funding by Source

Figure 3.19 Per Student General Education Funding

Figure 3.21 Per Student Supplemental Program Aid by Source

Figure 3.22 Per Student Supplemental Program Aid

Data Sources and Definitions

General education funding. Local and state revenues intended for the support of general education. The following revenue sources were used to determine the general education revenue totals: local tax levy, Core Curriculum Standards Aid (CCS), Supplemental CCS, stabilization aid, and Abbott parity aid. (Abbott Parity Aid is known as Educational Opportunity Aid, or EOA as of 2004–05.) Reported are the sum of these revenues. The per student funding is the sum of these revenues divided by the total resident enrollment in any given district grouping.

Total requested budget. The total budget amount requested by a district for the upcoming fiscal year in its initial budget submission to the New Jersey Department of Education.

Total approved budget. The total budget amount approved by the New Jersey Department of Education for a district in the upcoming fiscal year.

Supplemental program aid. The state and federal revenue intended to support health, nutrition, and social services in schools. “Title I,” is federal funding under the No Child Left Behind Act used to support high-poverty districts and schools. Demonstrably Effective Program Aid (DEPA) is state aid provided to schools with low-income students. Additional Abbott Aid is state aid for required programs in Abbott districts in addition to other approved programs, such as on-site clinics, that the Abbott district must prove are necessary. Reported are the sum of these revenues over the total resident enrollment in any given district grouping.

SOURCE: New Jersey Department of Education, Division of Finance, Office of School Funding, Advertised District Revenues, 2002–03 to 2003–04.

Figure 3.23 Student Attendance by District Grouping: Elementary Schools

Figure 3.24 Student Attendance by District Grouping: High Schools

Student attendance. The percent of students who are present at school each day on average. Attendance is calculated by dividing the sum of days present over the sum of all possible school days for all students.

SOURCE: New Jersey Department of Education, School Report Card, 1994–95 to 2002–03.

Figure 3.25 Child and Youth Well-Being Indicators

Child death rate. The number of deaths to children between ages 1 and 14, from all causes, per 1,000 children in this age range.

Teen death rate. The number of deaths from accidents, homicides, and suicides to teens between ages 15 and 19, per 1,000 teens in this age group.

Teen birth rate. The number of births to teenagers between ages 10–14 and 15–19 per 1,000 females in these age groups, respectively.

Child abuse and neglect—substantiated cases. The number of child abuse and/or neglect cases for children ages 17 and under per 1,000 children ages 0 to 17 that have been verified by the New Jersey Department of Human Services, Division of Youth and Family Services.

SOURCE: Annie E. Casey Foundation, 2004 Kids Count; Association for Children of New Jersey, Kids Count, 1997–2002; New Jersey Center for Health Statistics: Table N21. Live Births by Age of Mother for Selected Municipalities of Residence: New Jersey, 1997–2002; and 2000 US Census, Population by Age.

Figure 3.26 Category A Offenses by District Grouping: Elementary Schools

Figure 3.27 Category A Offenses by District Grouping: High Schools

Figure 3.28 NCLB (Category B) Index by District Grouping: Elementary Schools

Figure 3.29 NCLB (Category B) Index by District Grouping: High Schools

Category A offenses. The total number of the following types of offenses: (1) firearm offenses; (2) aggravated assaults on another student; (3) assaults with a weapon on another student; and (4) assaults on a school district staff member.

NCLB index. The rate of Category B offenses adjusted for enrollment: (1) simple assaults; (2) weapons possession or sales (other than a firearm); (3) gang fights; (4) robbery or extortion incidents; (5) sex offenses; (6) terroristic threats; (7) arsons; (8) sales or distribution of drugs; and (9) harassment and bullying incidents.

SOURCE: New Jersey Department of Education: Office of Program Support Services, Division of Student Services. Electronic Violence and Vandalism Reporting System, 1999–2003.

Figure 3.30 Suspension Rate by District Grouping: Elementary Schools

Figure 3.31 Suspension Rate by District Grouping: High Schools

Suspension rate. The percent of students who were suspended—in-school or out-of-school—at least once during the school year. Students suspended more than one time are counted once.

SOURCE: New Jersey Department of Education, School Report Card, 1994–95 to 2001–02; 2002–03.

Figure 3.32 New Jersey's Adequate Yearly Progress Targets for Language Arts Literacy

Figure 3.33 New Jersey's Adequate Yearly Progress Targets for Math

Adequate yearly progress targets for language arts literacy provide the percent of students that should pass the language arts

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literacy section of the ASK4, GEPA, and HSPA in 2002–03, 2004–05, 2007–08, 2010–11, and 2013–14. By 2013–14, 100% of all students should pass the language arts literacy exam.

Adequate yearly progress targets for math provide the percent of students that should pass the math section of the ASK4, GEPA, and HSPA in 2002–03, 2004–05, 2007–08, 2010–11, and 2013–14. By 2013–14, 100% of all students should pass the math exam.

SOURCE: New Jersey Department of Education: Office of Title I Program Planning and Accountability, 2004.

Figure 3.34 Categories and Action Steps for Schools Not Making Adequate Yearly Progress

Categories and actions steps for schools not making adequate yearly progress include:

Early warning. The first year of missing one or more AYP threshold. No actions are required under NCLB, but schools and districts should identify areas that need to be improved.

School improvement. The second and third consecutive year missing AYP threshold. In the second year, parents are notified and given the option to transfer their children to a school that made AYP. Schools must identify areas needing improvement and work with parents, teachers, and outside experts to develop a plan. In the third year, tutoring and other supplemental services must be made available.

Corrective action. The fourth and fifth consecutive year missing AYP threshold. In the fourth year, school choice and supplemental services are still available. In addition, schools must undertake at least one of a series of corrective actions, including: staff replacement; curriculum adoption; decreased school authority; external consultant to advise the school; extended school day or year; and/or reorganize school governance. In the fifth year, school must develop a plan for alternate school governance. Choice, supplemental services, and other corrective actions still required.

Restructuring. The sixth consecutive year of missing AYP threshold. Schools must implement alternate school governance developed in year five.

SOURCE: New Jersey Department of Education: Office of Title I Program Planning and Accountability, 2004.

Figure 3.35 Grade 4 Language Arts Literacy Average Score

Figure 3.38 Grade 4 Math Average Score

Figure 3.42 Grade 8 Language Arts Literacy Average Score

Figure 3.45 Grade 8 Math Average Score

Figure 3.49 Grade 11 (HSPT) Reading Average Score

Figure 3.51 Grade 11 (HSPA) Language Arts Literacy Average Score

Figure 3.54 Grade 11 (HSPT) Math Average Score

Figure 3.56 Grade 11 (HSPA) Math Average Score

Average scores. The weighted mean scores on the Grade 4, 8, and 11 assessment in language arts literacy and math. School-level results are weighted by the number of students taking the test prior to averaging across schools in a district grouping.

SOURCE: New Jersey Department of Education: Office of Assessment & Evaluation, 1997–98 to 2002–03; New Jersey Department of Education, School Report Card, 1999–00 to 2002–03.

Figure 3.36 Grade 4 Language Arts Literacy Proficiency

Figure 3.39 Grade 4 Math Proficiency

Figure 3.43 Grade 8 Language Arts Literacy Proficiency

Figure 3.46 Grade 8 Math Proficiency

Figure 3.50 Grade 11 (HSPT) Reading Proficiency

Figure 3.52 Grade 11 (HSPA) Language Arts Literacy Proficiency

Figure 3.55 Grade 11 (HSPT) Math Proficiency

Figure 3.57 Grade 11 (HSPA) Math Proficiency

Proficiency. The percent of students falling within the following proficiency thresholds on the Grade 4, 8, and 11 language arts literacy and math exams: partially proficient, proficient, and advanced proficient. School-level results are weighted by the number of students taking the test prior to averaging across schools in a district grouping. The HSPT had a passing threshold of 300 with a range of scores from 100 to 500. The following are the proficiency cut points for the ESPA/NJASK, GEPA, and HSPA.

	Partially Proficient	Proficient	Advanced Proficient
Beginning Cut Point	100	200	250
Ending Cut Point	199	249	300

SOURCE: New Jersey Department of Education: Office of Assessment & Evaluation, 1997–98 to 2002–03; New Jersey Department of Education, School Report Card, 1998–99 to 2002–03.

Figure 3.37 Grade 4 Language Arts Literacy Proficiency by Subgroup

Figure 3.40 Grade 4 Math Proficiency by Subgroup

Figure 3.44 Grade 8 Language Arts Literacy Proficiency by Subgroup

Figure 3.47 Grade 8 Math Proficiency by Subgroup

Figure 3.53 Grade 11 (HSPA) Language Arts Literacy Proficiency by Subgroup

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Figure 3.58 Grade 11 (HSPA) Math Proficiency by Subgroup

Proficiency by subgroup is the percent of white, Black, Hispanic, economically disadvantaged, special education, or limited English proficiency students that pass the Grade 4, 8, and 11 language arts literacy and math exams. Reported are those subgroups with at least 20 students taking the exam, except for students with disabilities, where at least 35 students had to take the test to be included in the analysis. School-level results are weighted by the number of students taking the test in each subgroup prior to averaging across schools in a district grouping.

SOURCE: New Jersey Department of Education: Office of Assessment & Evaluation, 2002–03; New Jersey Department of Education, Fall Survey, 2002–03.

Figure 3.41 Schools Not Making Adequate Yearly Progress: Grade 4

Figure 3.48 Schools Not Making Adequate Yearly Progress: Grade 8

Figure 3.59 Schools Not Making Adequate Yearly Progress: Grade 11

Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP). The measure set by each state to assess performance of all students including students with disabilities, students with limited English proficiency, migrant students, students eligible for free/reduced lunch, and white, Black, Hispanic, Asian/Pacific Islander, and Native American students. By 2013–14, all students in all subgroups must reach the proficiency level set by the state.

Grade 4. In 2003–04, 68 percent of Grade 4 students had to pass the language arts literacy exam in order to meet the AYP standard; 53% of Grade 4 students had to make a proficient score on the math exam in order to meet the 2003–04 AYP standard.

Grade 8. In 2003–04, 58 percent of Grade 8 students had to pass the language arts literacy exam in order to meet the AYP standard; 39% of Grade 4 students had to make a proficient score on the math exam in order to meet the 2003–04 AYP standard.

Grade 11. In 2003–04, 73 percent of Grade 11 students had to pass the language arts literacy exam in order to meet the AYP standard; 55 percent of Grade 11 students had to make a proficient score on the math exam in order to meet the 2003–04 AYP standard.

SOURCE: New Jersey Department of Education: Office of Title I Program Planning and Accountability, 2004.

Figure 3.60 Cumulative Promotion Index by District Grouping

Cumulative promotion index (CPI). An estimate that a ninth grader will graduate within four years. The estimate is calculated by multiplying the grade-to-grade promotion rate over a two-year period by the percent of 12th graders who graduated in the current year. The CPI is calculated through 2001–02 because the New Jersey Report Card changed the way it measured graduation in 2002–03.

SOURCE: New Jersey Department of Education, School Report Card, 1994–95 to 2002–03.

Figure 3.61 Graduation by Traditional (HSPT/HSPA) Grade 11 Exam by District Grouping

Figure 3.62 Graduation by Alternative (SRA) Grade 11 Exam by District Grouping

Graduation by Traditional (HSPT/HSPA) Grade 11 Exam. The percent of students graduating from high school by passing the Grade 11 exam.

Graduation by Alternative (SRA) Grade 11 Exam. The percent of students graduating from high school by taking the Special Review Assessment (SRA). The SRA is the alternative assessment to the HSPA.

SOURCE: New Jersey Department of Education, School Report Card, 1994–95 to 2002–03.

Figure 3.63 SAT Participation by District Grouping

Figure 3.64 SAT Verbal Average Score by District Grouping

Figure 3.65 SAT Math Average Score by District Grouping

SAT participation. The percent of twelfth graders taking the Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT).

Average scores are the weighted mean scores on the verbal and math sections of the Scholastic Aptitude Test. School-level results are weighted by the number of students taking the test prior to averaging across schools in a district grouping.

SOURCE: New Jersey Department of Education, School Report Card, 1994–95 to 2002–03.

4. School Facilities Construction

Figure 4.1 Camden’s First-Round Facilities Plan Overview

The first-round facilities plan was the initial plan for a district’s school construction.

SOURCE: Education Law Center communications with the New Jersey Schools Construction Corporation, New Jersey Department of Education and individual districts.

Figure 4.2 Overview of Camden’s Current Projects

SOURCE: Education Law Center communications with the New Jersey Schools Construction Corporation, New Jersey Department of Education, and individual districts.

Figure 4.3 Status of Facilities Projects: Camden and All Other Abbott Districts

SOURCE: Education Law Center communications with the New Jersey Schools Construction Corporation, New Jersey Department of Education, and individual districts.

Glossary

Abbott Advisory Council. A steering committee composed of district and community representatives that are responsible for the review of district policies and procedures as they relate to Abbott program implementation.

Abbott district. One of New Jersey's 31 poor urban school districts. Abbott districts: 1) receive state aid that ensures that they have the same per student funding as the wealthiest suburbs in the state; 2) offer full-day, full-year preschool on-demand to all eligible three- and four-year-olds; 3) implement school reforms to ensure that students learn the knowledge and skills required to master the state's Core Curriculum Content Standards; 4) offer programs and services designed to help low-income children come to school ready to learn; and 5) have 100% state-financed school facilities construction. The students of 28 districts were plaintiffs in the original *Abbott v. Burke* case decided by the New Jersey Supreme Court. The students of Neptune and Plainfield were added in 1999; students in Salem City were added in 2004. In the analyses that appear throughout

this report, Salem City is not included among the Abbott districts. The Abbott districts are listed in another Appendix to this report.

Abbott Parity Aid. The per student foundational funding level for the 31 Abbott districts that is equal to, or at parity with, the wealthiest suburban districts in New Jersey, also known as the I & J districts. Abbott parity aid is now known as Education Opportunity Aid.

Accelerated Schools. A Whole School Reform model that improves learning for at-risk K-8 students through acceleration of instruction rather than remediation; by improving school climate; and through school organizational changes based on a participatory process of decision-making.

Additional Abbott Aid. The per student supplemental funding intended to address the unique needs of urban students. Programs such as full-day kindergarten and health and social services referral and coordination are required in all Abbott schools, however schools can receive funding for other programs intended to assist students' needs

if the need is demonstrated to the New Jersey Department of Education (now known as Discretionary Educational Opportunity Aid).

Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP). The measure set by each state to assess performance of all students including students with disabilities, students with limited English proficiency, migrant students, students eligible for free/reduced lunch, and white, Black, Hispanic, Asian/Pacific Islander, and Native American students. By 2013–14, all students in all subgroups must reach the proficiency level set by the state.

Alternate Proficiency Assessment (APA). The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act mandates the participation of all students with disabilities in statewide assessments. States must develop and conduct alternate assessments for students who cannot participate in the general statewide testing program. As a result, the Alternate Proficiency Assessments are used as the statewide test for students with severe disabilities.

Alternate route. An alternate certification process adopted in 1985 that permits qualified individuals lacking education credentials to earn them in the public schools under a mentoring program and become licensed teachers. It allows people to enter teaching after they have worked in other careers.

Application for State School Aid (ASSA). The data collection document submitted by districts for the purpose of calculating most state school aid.

Assessment of Skills and Knowledge (ASK₄). The state assessment administered in Grade 4 to determine achievement of the Core Curriculum Content Standards. Prior to 2002–03, the test was known as the Elementary School Proficiency Assessment (ESPA).

Attendance/dropout prevention officer. Required staff member in schools serving students in Grades 6 through 12 to assist students at risk of dropout.

Benchmark. A standard against which performance may be judged.

Brigance Screen. An assessment published by Curriculum Associates, Inc., that screens key developmental and early academic skills.

Category A offenses. The total number of the following types of offenses: (1) firearm offenses; (2) aggravated assaults on another student; (3) assaults with a weapon on another student; and (4) assaults on a school district staff member.

Certification of Eligibility (CE). A provisional credential with lifetime validity issued to individuals who have completed the required degree, academic study, and applicable test requirements for certification. A CE permits individuals to seek and accept employment in a preschool program while they complete the additional requirements for the P-3 certificate.

Certification of Eligibility with Advanced Standing (CEAS). A provisional credential with lifetime validity issued to individuals who have completed the CE requirements plus traditional professional preparation programs. A CEAS permits individuals to

seek and accept employment in a preschool program while they complete the additional requirements for the P-3 certificate.

Child study team (CST). Consists of a school psychologist, a learning disabilities teacher/consultant, and school social worker who are employees of the school district responsible for conducting evaluations to determine eligibility for special education and related services for students with disabilities.

Coalition of Essential Schools. A Whole School Reform model that focuses on redesigning instruction in an entire high school so that the students acquire thinking skills that enable them to question and reason. The model uses personalized instruction and is based on nine common principles on which teachers must reach consensus and then decide how to apply them to instruction.

Comer School Development Program. A Whole School Reform model that focuses on bridging the gap between home and school by identifying and addressing the underlying problems that students and their

Glossary

families may have that interfere with the child's progress in school. It is designed to involve all school staff, community agencies, and parents in solving the problems that have been identified. Comer has three components: a School Planning and Management Team, a Student and Staff Support Team, and a Parent Involvement Team.

Community for Learning/Adaptive Learning Environments Model (CFL/ALEM).

A Whole School Reform model that focuses on high academic achievement and positive student self-perception. Each school must create its own planning and implementation framework that incorporates a school-wide organizational structure and a coordinated system of instruction and related services delivery. This model is designed to break down artificial barriers within the school and among the many agencies that provide services.

Comprehensive Educational Improvement and Financing Act (CEIFA). A law passed in 1996 to establish a definition of the consti-

tutional guarantee to a thorough and efficient system of public education through the establishment of Core Curriculum Content Standards and efficiency standards. CEIFA guarantees a level of funding known as the T & E (thorough and efficient) amount. The state's definition of the T & E amount was found unconstitutional under Abbott.

Core Curriculum Content Standards (CCCS). Standards adopted by the State Board of Education in 1996 to establish expectations for students to meet in seven academic and five workplace readiness areas. They outline the common expectations for student achievement throughout the 13 years of public education in the following subject areas: visual and performing arts, comprehensive health/physical education, language arts literacy, mathematics, science, social studies, and world languages. The five cross-content areas for workplace readiness encompass career planning; use of technology information and other tools; critical thinking/decision-making/problem-solving; self-management; and safety principles.

Core Curriculum Standards Aid (CCSA).

The amount of state aid that is distributed to all school districts for general fund expenses to ensure that each district can provide a thorough and efficient system of education consistent with the CCCS.

Corrective action. The fourth and fifth consecutive year missing AYP threshold. In the fourth year, school choice and supplemental services are still available. In addition, schools must undertake at least one of a series of corrective actions, including: staff replacement; curriculum adoption; decreased school authority; external consultant to advise the school; extended school day or year; and/or reorganize school governance. In the fifth year, the school must develop a plan for alternate school governance. Choice, supplemental services, and other corrective actions still required.

Creative Curriculum. An early childhood education curriculum developed by Teaching Strategies that applies child development and learning theories to an education environ-

ment that focuses planning around indoor and outdoor interest areas.

Cumulative promotion index. An estimate that a ninth grader will graduate within four years used in the absence of reliable graduation rates.

Curiosity Corner. An early childhood education curriculum developed by the Success For All Foundation that fosters cognitive, linguistic, social, physical, and emotional development of three- and four-year-olds.

Demonstrably Effective Program Aid (DEPA). State aid that is allocated to schools with low-income pupils to provide effective programs that have been shown to enhance the teaching/learning process, improve school governance, and provide students with collaborative learning environments and health and social service programs.

Demonstration Project. A school facilities project selected by the State Treasurer for construction by a redevelopment agency.

Department of Human Services (DHS). A partner with the New Jersey Department of Education in implementing the Abbott early childhood education program. DHS is responsible for licensing community childcare providers and funding wrap-around services in those providers.

Discretionary Education Opportunity Aid (DEOA). The per student supplemental funding intended to address the unique needs of urban students. Programs such as full-day kindergarten and health and social services referral and coordination are required in all Abbott schools, however schools can receive funding for other programs intended to assist students' needs if the need is demonstrated to the New Jersey Department of Education (formerly known as Additional Abbott v. Burke Aid).

District factor grouping (DFG). A system used by the New Jersey Department of Education to rank local school districts according to socio-economic status. DFGs are based on information available from the Census:

educational attainment of the adults in the community, employment rates, occupations, population density, and income/poverty. There are eight DFGs starting with A which designates the lowest socio-economic level and also include B, CD, DE, FG, GH, I, and J. The DFGs were recalculated in 2004 based on 2000 Census information. 1990 DFGs are used throughout this report.

Early Childhood Education Advisory Council (ECEAC). Community stakeholders who are responsible for the review the school district's progress towards full implementation of high-quality preschool programs in addition to participating in program planning, budget development, and early childhood facilities planning.

Early Childhood Education Program Expectations: Standards of Quality. A document containing guidelines for creating developmentally appropriate preschool learning environments that promote early literacy and other important goals. The guidelines support and prepare young children to meet New

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Jersey's Core Curriculum Content Standards (CCCS) when they enter Kindergarten.

Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale–Revised (ECERS–R). A program quality assessment used in early childhood settings.

Early Childhood Program Aid (ECPA). A state aid program for preschool and support services in districts with high concentrations of low-income students including the Abbott districts and 102 other districts. Previously, ECPA funds used to support the “second half-day” of Kindergarten, required under Abbott. Now, it is funded through Discretionary Educational Opportunity Aid.

Early Language Assessment System (ELAS). Assessment of preschool students intended to help preschool teachers tailor instruction to meet children's needs.

Early warning. The first year of missing one or more AYP threshold(s). No actions are required under NCLB, but schools and

districts should identify areas that need to be improved.

Education Opportunity Aid (EOA). The per student foundational funding level for the 31 Abbott districts that is equal to, or at parity with, the wealthiest suburban districts in New Jersey, also known as the I & J districts. Abbott parity aid is now known as Education Opportunity Aid.

Educational Facilities Construction and Financing Act (EFCFA). Passed in July 2000 to initiate the state's school construction program.

Elementary School Proficiency Assessment (ESPA). The former state assessment administered in Grade 4 to determine achievement of the Core Curriculum Content Standards. Updated in 2002–03 and now known as the ASK4.

Eligible preschool population. The number of eligible three- and four-year olds for preschool estimated by the New Jersey Department of Education by doubling the number of

students enrolled in the previous year in Kindergarten and Grade 1 in a school district's public, charter, and nonpublic schools.

English as a Second Language (ESL). Programs in K–12 education that require a daily developmental second language program of up to two periods of instruction based on student needs. The programs offer listening comprehension, speaking, reading and writing in English using second-language teaching techniques. The teachers also incorporate the cultural aspects of the students' experiences into their ESL instruction.

English language learner (ELL). Students whose native language is other than English and who have difficulty speaking, reading, writing or understanding the English language as measured by an English language proficiency test. ELL students, also known as Limited English Proficient students (LEP), require bilingual or English as a Second Language (ESL) programs to learn successfully in classrooms where the language of instruction is English.

Enhanced Head Start. The program under which existing Head Start seats are upgraded to meet Abbott standards funded with both state and federal money.

Equalized. An adjustment made to property values by the New Jersey Department of Treasury to enable comparisons across municipalities regardless of the year in which the most current property assessment was made.

Expanded Head Start. The program serving children in Abbott districts that were not previously enrolled in Federal Head Start, funded entirely with state money.

Facilities Advisory Board (FAB). An advisory board composed of parents, teachers, principals, community representatives, an architect, an engineer, and a staff person from the New Jersey Department of Education. The board was designed to guide the development of the Long Range Facilities Plan.

Facilities Efficiency Standards (FES). Developed by the Commissioner of Education for elementary, middle, and high schools.

These standards determine the extent to which a district's construction project qualifies for state aid. They were intended to represent the standard of instructional and administrative spaces to be considered educationally adequate to support the achievement of the Core Curriculum Content Standards.

Facilities Management Plan (FMP). The original term used to describe the Long-Range Facilities Plan (LRFP). The FMP is a plan developed by a district for repairing physical infrastructure deficiencies, educational adequacy deficiencies, and capacity deficits of the district's school buildings. All Abbott districts were required to develop comprehensive five-year facilities management plans.

Fall Survey. A report prepared by each district on a form provided by the Commissioner providing enrollment counts and selected demographic characteristics of the student enrollment.

Family liaison (parent–community coordinator). Required staff member in all schools to coordinate family education and encourage the involvement of parents in the daily school activities and decision-making. The family liaison is also a member of the Family Support team.

Family worker. A position required in every Abbott early childhood education program in a community provider setting. There must be one family worker for every 40 children and their families being served by the center. The family worker works with the center and the parents to ensure that the parents and their children obtain necessary health and social services.

Feasibility study. A pre-construction evaluation undertaken by a district to determine if—because of health and safety or efficiency—it would be more feasible to replace or renovate a school facility.

Full-day/full-year. Under Abbott, preschool programs must be made available for ten hours a day, 245 days a year. For a minimum of 180

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school calendar days, a program must include at least a six-hour educational component meeting Department of Education requirements and a four-hour wrap-around services component meeting Department of Human Services (DHS) licensing requirements. The remaining 65 days must meet DHS requirements for the ten hours of service.

General education funding. Local and state revenues intended for the support of general education. The following revenue sources were used to determine the general education revenue totals: local tax levy, Core Curriculum Standards Aid (CCSA), Supplemental CCSA, Stabilization Aid, and Abbott Parity Aid. (Abbott Parity Aid is known as Educational Opportunity Aid, or EOA as of 2004–05.)

Grade Eight Proficiency Assessment (GEPA). The Grade 8 test that replaced the Early Warning Test in 1999. The GEPA is intended to provide information about student progress toward mastery of the skills specified by the Core Curriculum Content Standards.

Guidance counselor. Staff member required in all schools as a member of the Family Support Team.

Health–social service coordinator. Required staff member responsible for the coordination of and referral of students for health and social services in schools serving students in Grades 6 through 12.

High School Proficiency Assessment (HSPA). The Grade 11 test that replaced the HSPT in 2001–02 used to determine student achievement of the knowledge and skills specified by all areas of the Core Curriculum Content Standards and Workplace Readiness Standards. Passing all sections of the HSPA or the Special Review Assessment (SRA) is a requirement for receiving a high school diploma.

High School Proficiency Test (HSPT). The Grade 11 test formerly administered in the fall of the junior year, consisting of three sections: reading, mathematics, and writing. The HSPT was replaced by the HSPA in 2001–02.

High/Scope. An early childhood education curriculum developed by the High/Scope Educational Research Foundation that encourages children to make choices about materials and activities throughout the day. As they pursue their choices and plans, children explore, ask and answer questions, solve problems, and interact with classmates and adults, engaging in activities that foster developmentally important skills and abilities.

Highest educational attainment. The percent of adults ages 25 and over by the highest level of school completed.

Highly qualified teachers (HQT). The percent of teachers that have obtained full State certification or passed the State teacher licensing examination, and hold a license to teach. New teachers must hold at least a bachelor's degree and have demonstrated, by passing a State test, subject knowledge and teaching skills in the core content areas: English, reading or language arts, mathematics, science, world languages, civics and govern-

ment, economics, arts (music, theatre, and art), history, and geography.

In-district preschool. A preschool program housed in school district buildings.

Individualized Education Program (IEP). A written plan developed at a meeting that includes appropriate school staff and parents or guardians. It determines the special education program for a student with disabilities through individually designed instructional activities constructed to meet goals and objectives established for the student. It establishes the rationale for the students' placement, which should be in the "least restrictive environment."

Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). The federal statute that mandates a free, appropriate public education for students with disabilities. In New Jersey, that includes students ages three to twenty one.

Instructional facilitator. Staff member required in schools serving students in

Kindergarten through Grade 6 to assist in the implementation of Whole School Reform.

Intervention and referral services (I&RS). A team case management strategy for identifying and helping students at risk for behavioral problems.

Least restrictive environment. The standard that, to the maximum extent appropriate, children with disabilities should be educated with children who do not have disabilities. It means that special classes, separate schooling, or other removal of children with disabilities from the regular educational environment should occur only when the severity of the disability is such that education in regular classes with the use of supplementary aids and services cannot be adequately provided in a general education environment.

Librarian/media specialist. Required staff member in all schools to ensure that classrooms and libraries have appropriate materials to assist students in mastering the curriculum.

Local tax levy. The amount of funding that a local school district can raise based on property wealth and income levels. The local tax share of educational costs is used to determine the amount of Core Curriculum Standards Aid that a district will receive, if any.

Long Range Facilities Plan (LRFP). The name now used to describe the Facilities Management Plans (FMP). It is a plan developed by a district to outline repairs to physical infrastructure deficiencies, educational adequacy deficiencies, and capacity deficits of the district's school buildings. All Abbott districts were required to develop comprehensive five-year facilities management plans.

Master teacher. A position required in every Abbott early childhood education program. There must be one master teacher for every 20 early childhood education classrooms to coordinate early childhood education programs and assist in the provision of early childhood education professional development. The official position title for master preschool teachers in districts with collective bargaining

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agreements with a local affiliate of the New Jersey Education Association is “education program specialist.”

Modern Red Schoolhouse. A Whole School Reform Model that strives to help all students master subject matter through the construction of a standards-driven curriculum, flexibility in organizing instruction and deploying resources, and the use of advanced technology in learning and management.

National Assessment of Educational Progress. An effort by the U.S. Department of Education National Center for Education Statistics to measure educational achievement of American students in reading, math, and science and the changes in that achievement over time. The program also provides scores for subpopulations defined by demographic characteristics and by specific background characteristics and experiences.

National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC). A professional organization for early childhood educators and others dedicated to improving the quality

of programs for children from birth through Grade 3.

NCLB index. The rate of Category B offenses adjusted for enrollment: (1) simple assaults; (2) weapons possession or sales (other than a firearm); (3) gang fights; (4) robbery or extortion incidents; (5) sex offenses; (6) terroristic threats; (7) arsons; (8) sales or distribution of drugs; and (9) harassment and bullying incidents.

New Jersey School Report Card. Prepared and disseminated annually to parents and other interested taxpayers within each local school district. It also is accessible on the NJDOE Web site. The report card for each school building in the state contains information about student enrollment, test scores, attendance, and graduation rates, as well as information about teaching and administrative staff.

No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB). The 2001 reauthorization of the federal program, Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA).

Nurse/health specialist. Staff member required in all schools as a member of the Family Support Team.

Nursery or elementary certification (N-8). Teachers who have a nursery school or K-8 certificate and two years teaching experience in an early childhood setting are certified to teach in a preschool setting.

Other private providers. Preschool programs run by private organizations (other than Head Start) under contract to the school district.

Parents as Teachers (PAT). Program run by the Department of Human Services aimed at supporting the development of preschool students by giving parents information on topics such as child development and growth, literacy, and positive discipline.

Persistently dangerous schools. The No Child Left Behind Act specifies a standard of safety beyond which schools are defined as “persistently dangerous.” Under the “Unsafe School Choice Option,” the law provides that families of children who are victims of

violence or who go to a persistently dangerous school may choose to send their child to another public school in the district or a charter school in the same city. A school is called persistently dangerous if it meets either one of the two following conditions for three consecutive years: 1) Seven or more of the following types of serious incidents, known as Category A offenses: firearm offenses; aggravated assaults on another student; assaults with a weapon on another student; and assaults on a school district staff member. 2) An index rating of 1 or more (calculated by a ratio of the sum of the following incidents over the square root of the enrollment): simple assault; weapon possession or sales (other than a firearm; gang fight; robbery or extortion; sex offense; terroristic threat; arson; sales or distribution of drugs; and harassment and bullying.

Preschool Expansion Aid (PSEA). A state aid program for preschool programs in Abbott districts to help cover costs associated with increased enrollment.

Preschool Mathematics Inventory (PCMI). Assessment of the materials and teaching strategies used to support and enhance children's math skills.

Preschool through Grade 3 certification (P-3). A teaching credential required for any new preschool teacher in an Abbott district in either a district program or a community provider setting. With some exceptions, existing teachers must make progress toward attaining the P-3 endorsement by 2004.

Proficiency. The percent of students passing a state administered exam aimed at measuring a student's mastery of the Core Curriculum Content Standards.

Resident enrollment. The number of students other than preschoolers, postgraduate pupils, or postsecondary vocational pupils, who, on the last school day prior to October 16 of the current year, are residents of the district.

Restructuring. The sixth consecutive year of missing AYP threshold. Schools must imple-

ment alternate school governance developed in year five.

School-Based Youth Services Program. A program of student prevention, intervention, and treatment services funded by the New Jersey Department of Human Services.

School improvement. The second and third consecutive year missing AYP threshold. In the second year, parents are notified and given the option to transfer their children to a school that made AYP. Schools must identify areas needing improvement and work with parents, teachers, and outside experts to develop a plan. In the third year, tutoring and other supplemental services must be made available.

School Leadership Councils (SLC). A volunteer group composed of the principal, teachers, non-instructional staff, parents, community representatives, and the Whole School Reform facilitator that represents school staff and the neighborhood; their primary purpose is to help improve teaching and learning by participating in program planning

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and decision-making and encouraging broad participation by school staff and neighborhood stakeholders.

Schools Construction Corporation (SCC). State agency created under former Governor McGreevy to oversee the completion of the Long Range Facilities Plan.

Security officer. Required staff member in all schools as needed to provide school security and address student disruptions and violence.

Self-Assessment Validation System (SAVS). Self-evaluation created by the Office of Early Childhood Education at the New Jersey Department of Education; the evaluation is intended for use in planning the district's programs.

Social worker. Required staff member of the Family Support Team in schools serving students in Kindergarten through Grade 6.

Special Review Assessment (SRA). An alternative assessment that provides students with the opportunity to exhibit their understanding and mastery of the HSPA skills in contexts

that are familiar and related to their experiences. The SRA content is linked to the HSPT/HSPA test specifications. This is necessary in order to ensure that students who are certified through the SRA have demonstrated the same skills and competencies at comparable levels as students who pass the written test.

Standardized test. An assessment that is administered and scored in exactly the same way for all students. Traditional standardized tests are typically mass-produced and machine-scored; they are designed to measure skills and knowledge that are thought to be taught to all students in a fairly standardized way. Performance assessments also can be standardized if they are administered and scored in the same way for all students.

Student mobility. The percent of students who entered or left school during the school year. Districts may or may not report a single child who leaves and enters school multiple times throughout the school year as multiple incidents.

Students with disabilities. The percent of students with an individualized education program (IEP), regardless of placement and program involvement. An IEP contains special instructional activities to meet the goals and objectives of the student.

Success for All/Roots and Wings. Under Abbott, the presumptive Whole School Reform Model for elementary schools. Success for All is a reading program that helps students read on grade level by third grade. The model focuses on reading and language arts and includes a family support team. Roots & Wings expands Success for All in other major subject areas, such as math, social studies, and science.

Supplemental Core Curriculum Standards Aid (SCCS). The state aid for low-income districts that supplements CCSA to lessen the impact on the local tax rate.

Supplemental program aid. The state and federal revenue intended to support health, nutrition, and social services in schools. "Title I," is federal funding under the No Child

Left Behind Act used to support high-poverty districts and schools. Demonstrably Effective Program Aid (DEPA) is state aid provided to schools with low-income students. Additional Abbott Aid is state aid for required programs in Abbott districts in addition to other approved programs, such as on-site clinics, that the Abbott district must prove are necessary. (As of 2004, Additional Abbott Aid is known as Discretionary Education Opportunity Aid or DEOA.)

Supports for Early Literacy Assessment (SELA). Assessment of the classroom practices used to support children's early language and literacy skills.

Teacher tutor. Staff member required in schools serving students in Grades 1 through 6 to provide one-to-one or small-group tutoring to students reading below grade level.

Technology coordinator. Required staff member in all schools to assist in the implementation of educational technology throughout schools.

TerraNova. A standardized test used to assess performance in Kindergarten through Grade 2.

Thorough and Efficient (T&E). Refers to New Jersey's constitutional provision that all children have a right to a "thorough and efficient system of free public schools."

Whole School Reform (WSR). A complete restructuring of an entire school, putting in place a series of programs and strategies that have been proven by research to be effective. To succeed, this restructuring requires the support and participation of those who must carry it out, including principals, teachers, support staff, parents, and community members. The WSR initiative is systemic in nature, unlike previous generations of reforms that were incremental and piecemeal.

Wrap-around services. Services required in Abbott early childhood education programs. They consist of activities held during the four hours before and/or after the required six-

hour educational component during the ten-hour full-day program. They also are provided through the summer program.

Zero-based budgeting. A type of budgeting procedure that analyzes and justifies costs from a base of zero, rather than the previous year's balance, in order to improve fiscal efficiency.

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This report was written by Lesley Hirsch and Erain Applewhite-Coney, Psy.D, Co-Directors of the Abbott Indicators Project at the Education Law Center. Letitia Logan of the Education Law Center and Derek Ziegler of CAMConnect also made significant contributions to the writing.

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Camden Indicators Project Steering Committee

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Jose Delgado, Community Resident
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 Deborah Johnson, Camden Board of Education
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 Josephine Norward, Ph.D., Camden City Youth Services Commission
 David Weathington, Camden Board of Education

Bill Whitlow, Rutgers University
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The comprehensiveness and usefulness of this report is a testament to the many contributions listed here. Any errors or omissions are, of course, the full responsibility of the primary authors.

About the Education Law Center

The Education Law Center (ELC) was established in 1973 to advocate on behalf of New Jersey's public school children for access to an equal and adequate education under state and federal laws. ELC works to improve educational opportunities for low-income students and students with disabilities through public education, policy initiatives, research, communications and, when necessary, legal action.

ELC serves as counsel to the plaintiffs in the *Abbott v. Burke* case—more than 300,000 preschool and school-age children in 31 urban school districts throughout New Jersey. Through the *Abbott* decisions, the New Jersey Supreme Court has established an unprecedented legal framework of remedial measures to assure the rights of urban public school children to an adequate education. The remedies ordered by the Court include

standards-based education and reform supported by foundational funding equal to New Jersey's most affluent suburbs; supplemental funding for programs that address the social and health needs of students, whole school reform; school based management; high quality preschool for all three and four year olds; and safe and educationally adequate school facilities. ELC's successes in *Abbott* have resulted in an additional \$800 million in foundational state aid each year for the *Abbott* districts and schools, \$300 million in preschool aid, and \$6 billion in school construction funds. The New York Times editorialized that *Abbott* represents "the most important equal education ruling since *Brown v. Board of Education*" (April 30, 2002).

ELC also operates the Student Rights Project (SRP) to protect the educational rights of all students, focusing on students with disabilities. SRP is the only non-profit,

legal assistance program in New Jersey that specializes in education law and provides free legal representation to income-eligible parents, guardians and caregivers of students in disputes involving K-12 public education. Because demand for SRP's services far exceeds attorney resources, SRP gives priority to low-income students who attend school in poor urban or rural districts.

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Erain Applewhite-Coney is co-director of the Abbott Indicators Project at the Education Law Center (ELC) in Newark, New Jersey. As a licensed psychologist and certified school psychologist, Dr. Applewhite-Coney has worked in various capacities within schools, including counseling, teacher and parent consultation, assessment, and work in the implementation of prevention programs. In addition, she has provided consultation to school faculty and administration to assist them with the process of accreditation and strategic action planning. Dr. Applewhite-Coney also has experience conducting therapy with children and adolescents in hospital and community-based settings.

Prior to coming to ELC, Dr. Applewhite-Coney was a postdoctoral fellow at The Consultation Center of Yale University School of Medicine. There, she worked as part of the local evaluation team conducting an assessment of school needs for the Partnership for Kids Project, an initiative funded by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration to introduce a behavioral system of care for students and families in Bridgeport, CT schools. She also served on the local evaluation team for

Bridgeport Safe Start, a citywide initiative with the goal of reducing the incidence and impact of exposure to violence in the home for children birth to six. Dr. Applewhite-Coney received her B.A. in Psychology and Spanish from New York University, and a Psy.D. in School Psychology from Rutgers University.

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